

> 59 Ways You Can Save the Oceans

SEPTEMBER 2004

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THE MAGAZINE DIVERS TRUST

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## DRY SUITS RATED

ScubaLab Reviews 19 Ways to Stay  
Dry While You're Getting Wet

## WORLD'S BEST MARINE LIFE

Readers Name the  
Top 10 Destinations

## DIVING IN VAIN

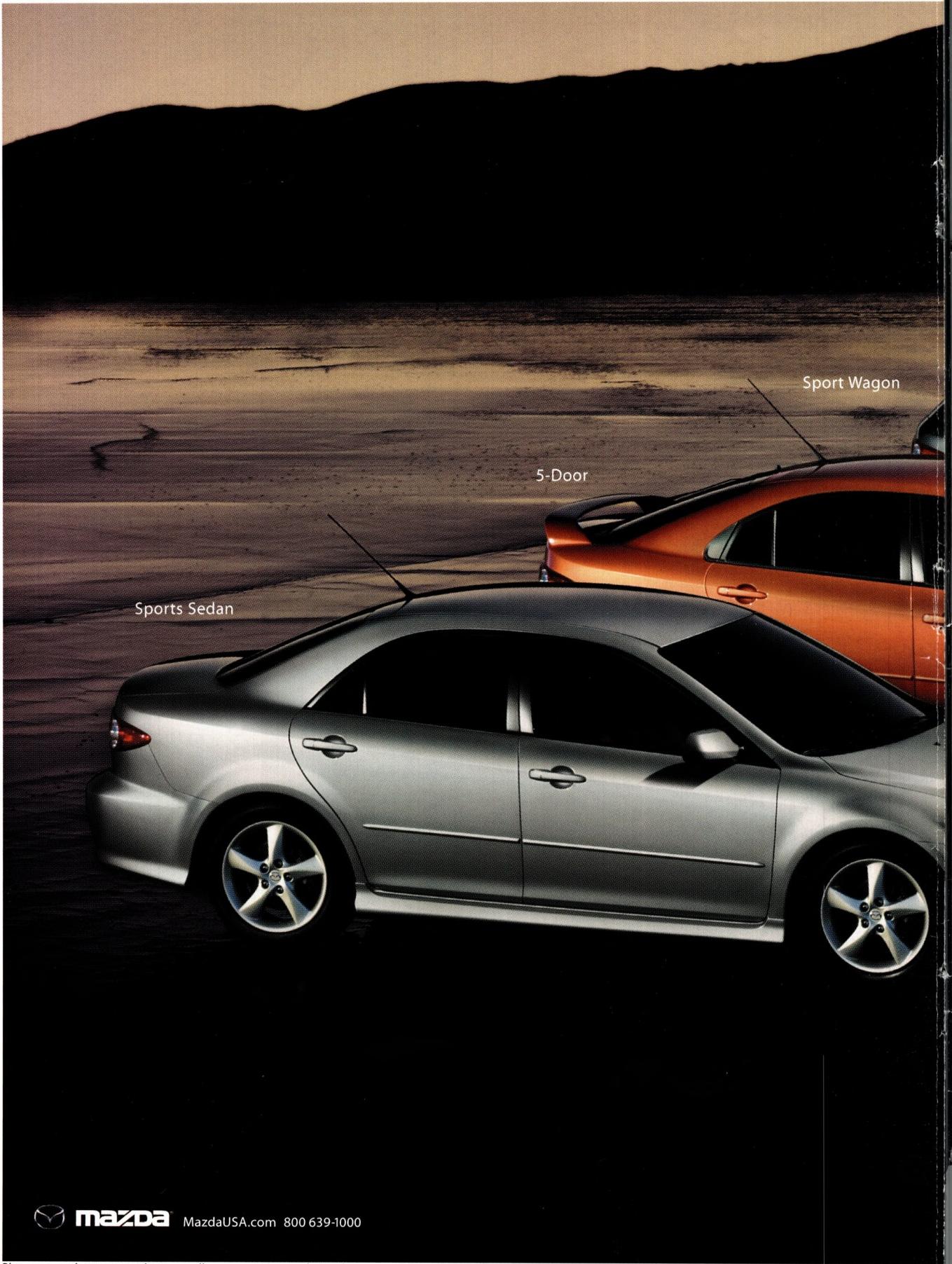
The Truth About Cosmetic  
Surgery and Scuba



MICRONESIA SHINES:  
A mastigias jellyfish suspended in Palau's Jellyfish Lake.

SEPTEMBER 2004

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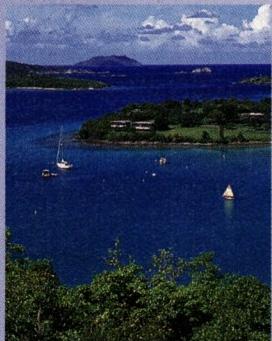
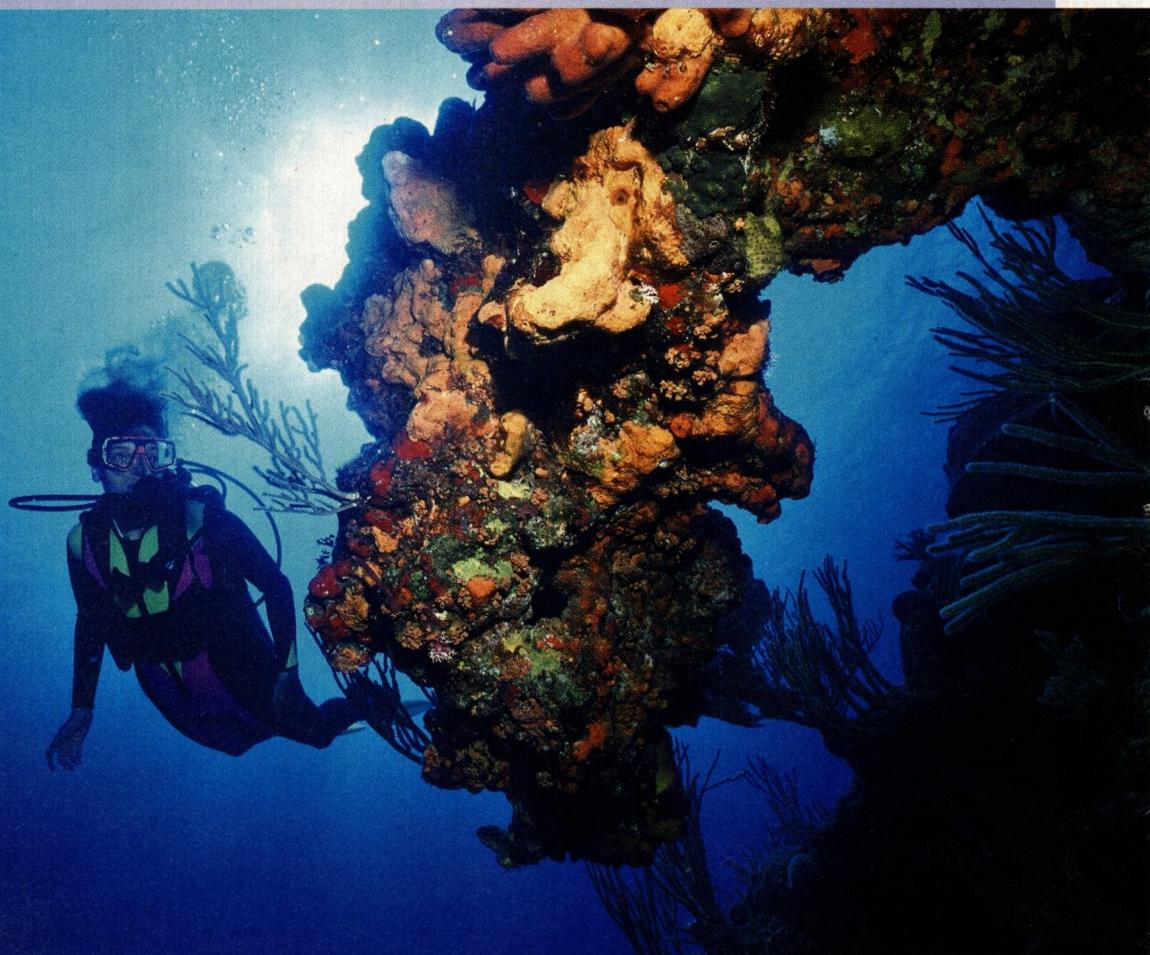


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# T A L K

( EDITOR'S NOTE )

## How to Change the World

We want you to do one thing for the marine environment because sometimes the biggest problems require the smallest solutions. **BY BUCK BUTLER**

**L**IKE OTHER FORMS OF WILDERNESS TRAVEL, ocean diving provides its practitioners with a healthy dose of perspective: When we submerge ourselves in the vastness of open water, any sense of self-importance we've brought with us floats to the surface in our first stream of exhaled bubbles. In an underwater space that seems limitless when viewed from within, we just seem so damned tiny.

Likewise, the challenges that afflict the world's oceans can seem overwhelming in scope and scale. When the problems are as big as overfishing, pollution and coastal overdevelopment, it's easy to think that there's no way one person, one diver, can do anything to bring about positive change. But just as the trek to the peak of Mt. Everest is made step by tiny step, positive change often comes in tiny increments.

At *Scuba Diving*, we understand there's no easy way to reverse the tide of environmental degradation, but we also understand that given a simple choice between eco-friendly and environmentally damaging practices, the vast majority of recreational divers will choose to

do what's best for the oceans. With that in mind, we're introducing a new environmental initiative with this issue called "Do One Thing for the Marine Environment."

Starting on p. 56, you'll find dozens of ideas for things large and small that you and your dive buddies can do to make a difference. If you have the time and energy to organize a local coastal cleanup, we applaud you. But if you don't, you'll find plenty of other, easier ways to help out. To support your efforts, we've also created a new section of our web site ([www.scubadiving.com/doonething](http://www.scubadiving.com/doonething)), a place for you to pledge what you're going to do for the marine environment. Here, you can also exchange ideas with other readers and challenge your buddies to match your commitment. With every diver who gets involved, the situation improves incrementally. And suddenly we don't seem so damned tiny anymore.



STEVE BARBARA (BOTTOM LEFT); JAMES WING



( CONTRIBUTOR )

**STEVE CHAPPLE,** who wrote this month's travel guide, "Micronesia Revealed," lives on the Big Island of Hawaii and writes for magazines and newspapers including *The New York Times* and *Men's Journal*. "Palau is sophisticated wilderness," he says, "different from the Amazon or Africa—no malaria, no poisonous snakes, with an other-worldly beauty that keeps you nicely lost in your own mind."

( ONLINE )

### Dive Deals

If you're looking for a last-minute dive getaway this fall, make [ScubaDiving.com's](http://www.scubadiving.com) Dive Deals your first stop. You'll find everything from a Fall Fiesta in Cozumel to live-aboard trips with underwater photo pros. If it's a dive trip you crave, we'll help you find one that fits your budget, tastes and skill level. Go to: [www.scubadiving.com/divedeals](http://www.scubadiving.com/divedeals).

## ( LETTER )

## Testing 1, 2, 3 ...

**IN "CLASS OF 2004"** (July '04), you used an analogy of "racehorse" versus "workhorse" regs to draw an appropriate distinction between regulator performance characteristics. While this was instructive, the article highlighted only the advantages of "racehorse" models while failing to identify the advantages of "workhorse" regulators—simplicity of design and use, durability, ease of repair, frequency of repair and performance over time.

ScubaLab deserves much credit for driving regulator innovation and improved breathing performance. However, I would respectfully submit that you rely too heavily on numeric ratings based on breathing machine data. Your protocol that rates performance at 75 RMV at 198 feet is extreme and unreasonable. When equal points are given for both extreme and typical workloads, the point total is artificially distorted.

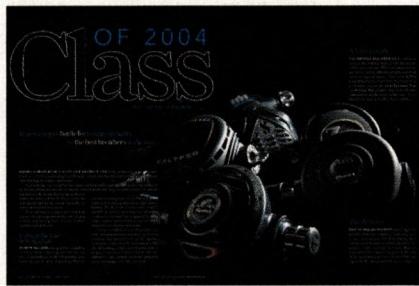
Sherwood Scuba produces the most durable and reliable regulators in diving—just ask resort operators which regulators they value for repeated daily use. Our philosophy is that real-world performance is more important than simulator scores. Unfortunately, your test protocols failed to recognize our considerable design efforts.

While your Ergonomic Evaluation provides readers with some information concerning real-world regulator performance, expanding the breadth of your testing would improve the applicability of your ratings and better inform your readers.—Bill Oliver, Director of Product Development, Sherwood Scuba

## ( HOW TO REACH US )

We want to know what's on your mind. Here are three easy ways to tell us:

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## ( THE NUMBERS )

## VARIETY, THE SPICE OF LIFE

# 56%

Percentage of divers who say they own five or more brands of dive gear.

## THE REGULARS

# 40%

Percentage of divers who say they visit their local dive shop twice a month or more.

(Source: Surveys of users on [www.scubadiving.com](http://www.scubadiving.com))

## ( ATTENTION )

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Oceanic and Aeris have issued consumer notices warning divers of a defect in two models of BC power inflators. Affected are Oceanic's Reliant power inflators fitted to various BCs sold between Feb. 1 and June 24, 2004; and the Aeris AW3 inflators on Atmos XT BCs sold between May 1 and June 24, 2004. The inflators can stick in the depressed position. Divers should stop using these inflators and see authorized dealers for a free repair. For more information, visit [www.oceanicworldwide.com](http://www.oceanicworldwide.com) or [www.diveaeris.com](http://www.diveaeris.com).

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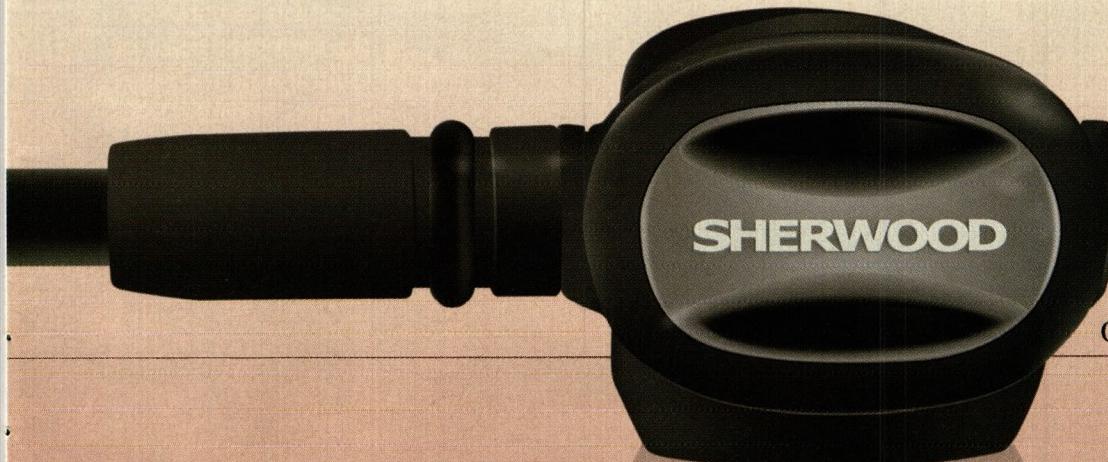


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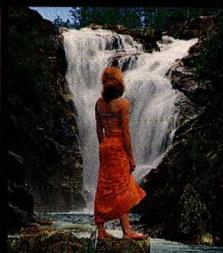
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## 68

Never dive cold again:  
ScubaLab reviews 19 dry suits.



## 56 Do One Thing

Do you love the ocean? Then it's time to do more than just enjoy it. While the world's seas are at risk from a variety of threats, there is good news: Divers are uniquely qualified to help set things right. Here's how you can help. *By Denis Devine*

### DIVE LOG

## 62 Curaçao

From shore and boat alike, divers find the variety of wrecks and reefs off this southern Caribbean gem as enticing as the brightly colored Dutch facades lining the capital's waterfront. *Text and Photography by Donald Tipton*

Cover photo by Carlos Villoch

## 68 Dry Suits Rated

When it comes to staying warm in the water, there's one simple, indisputable truth: Nothing beats a dry suit. And divers everywhere are embracing the benefits of staying dry. ScubaLab puts 19 models to the test to find the ones that do it best. *By John Brumm*

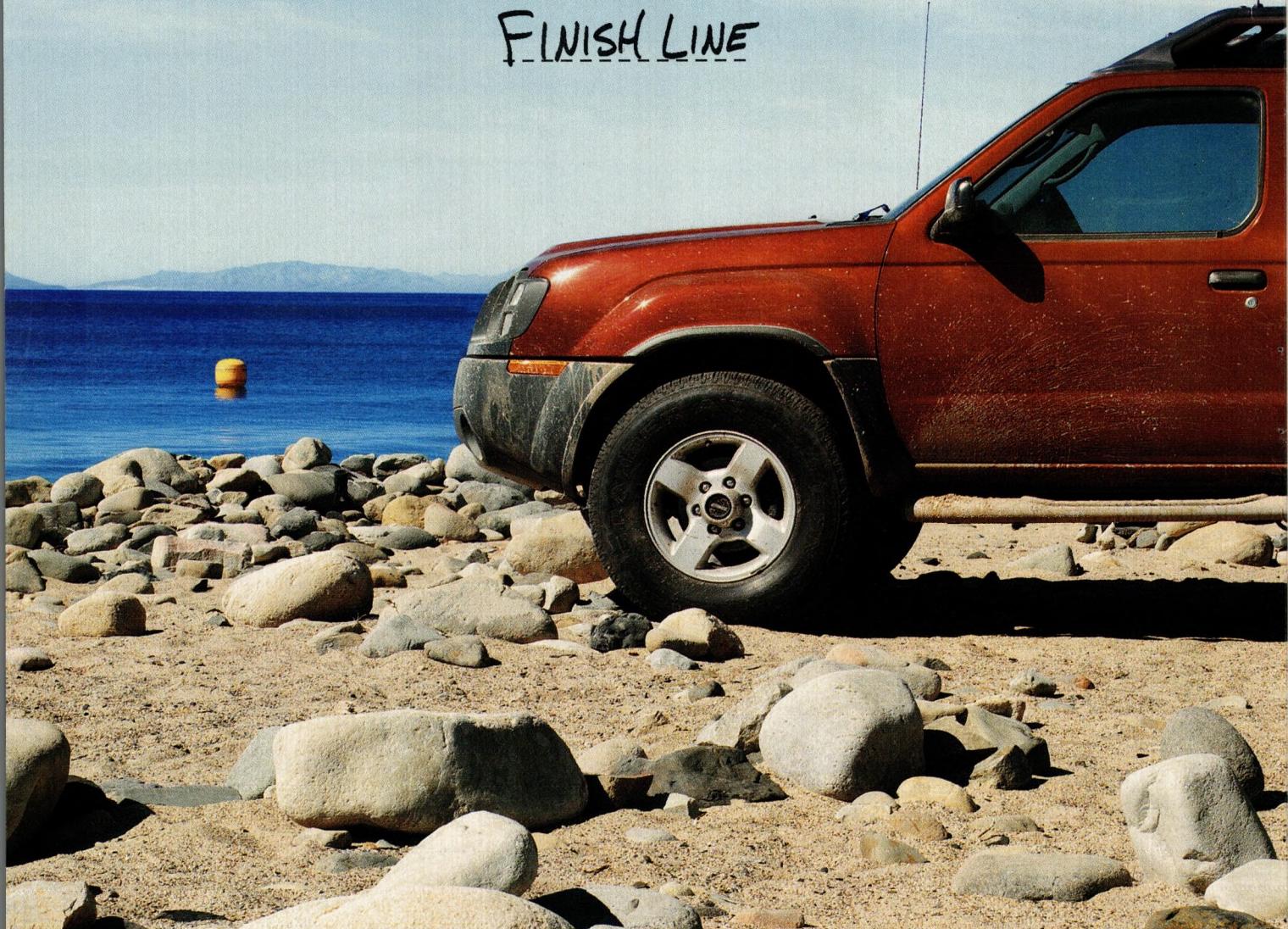
### LESSONS FOR LIFE

## 76 Bad Breath

A technical diving instructor learns to practice what he preaches about tank maintenance when his regulator delivers a mouthful of foul-tasting water on a training dive. *By Michael Ange*



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## THE GREAT DIVES

**17 EUROPEAN DIVERS** and schools of fish swarm a volcanic seamount in the Canary Islands; black sand intensifies the vivid colors of an Indonesian reef; and a classic site showcases the best of Cozumel diving.

## CURRENTS

**22 A POSSE OF FISH-WRANGERS** rounds up a pair of Indo-Pacific interlopers in the Florida Keys. **Plus:** A multitasking PDA for divers, a male fish that understands the seductive power of good parenting, a treasure hunt for 21st-century divers and a Q&A with *Bridget Jones's Diary* author Helen Fielding about the diving heroine of her latest book.

## TRAINING

**80 YOUR BODY** Do cosmetic surgery and scuba mix? Or will that face-lift put a wrinkle in your next dive?

**85 INSTRUCTIONAL** How divers learned the hard way that when good dives go bad, there's only one person you can turn to: yourself. Here's how to kick the follow-the-leader habit.

**89 PHOTOGRAPHY** Take a different view of the color-saturated underwater world by shooting in black and white.

**92 ADVANCED DIVING** Nearly everybody who has ever breathed from a regulator has flirted with the idea of getting paid to dive. But do you have what it takes to turn pro?

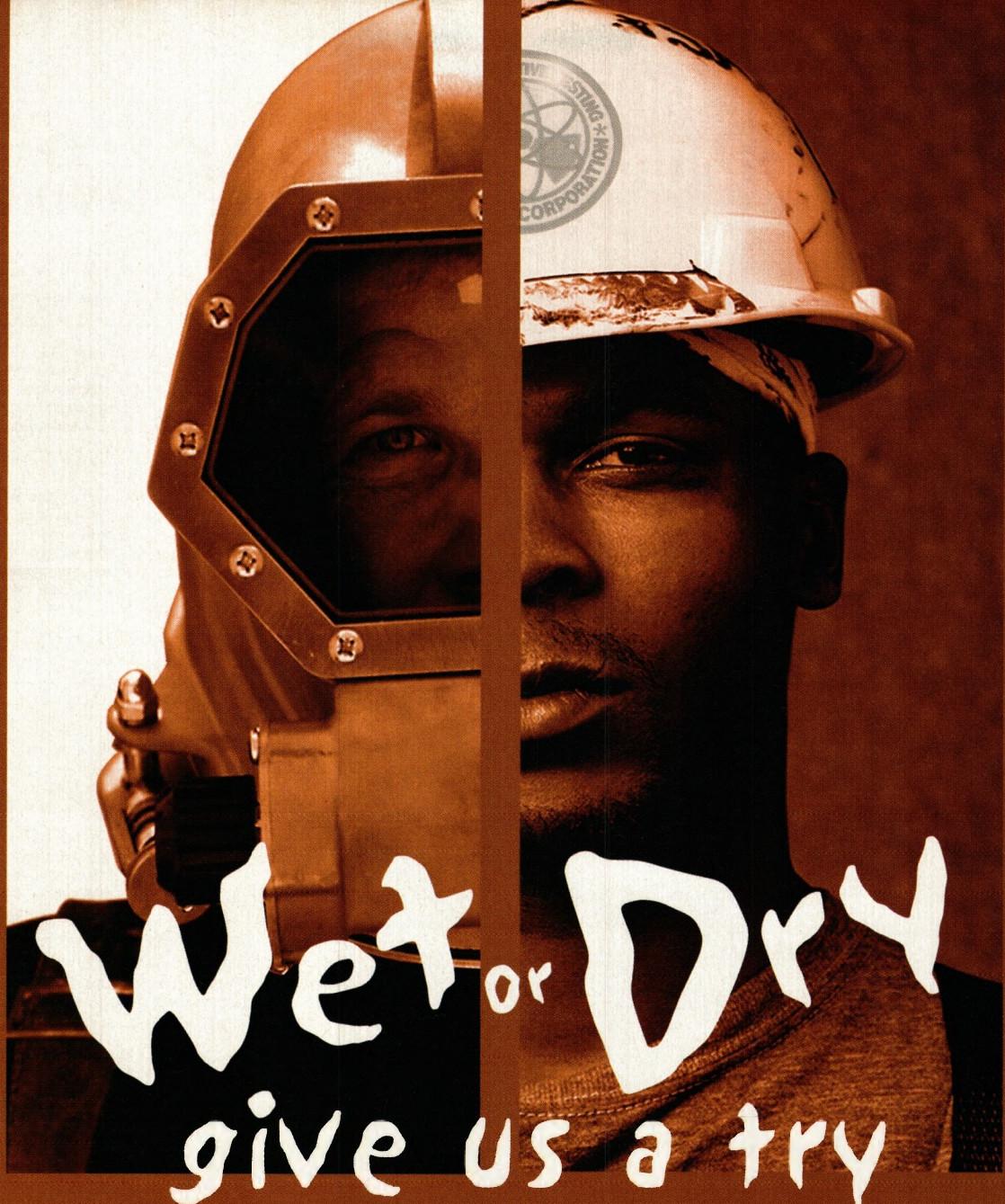


**34 JEWELS OF THE PACIFIC** Palau and Truk Lagoon are a glorious study in contrasts.

**40 DRIVE & DIVE** Gorgeous reefs, venerable wrecks and multimillion-dollar mansions in Florida's Palm Beach County.

**46 READER RATINGS** Our readers name the top 10 places in the world to take a fish ID guide.

3 TALK 51 DIVE DEALS 98 IN DEPTH 104 LOOK



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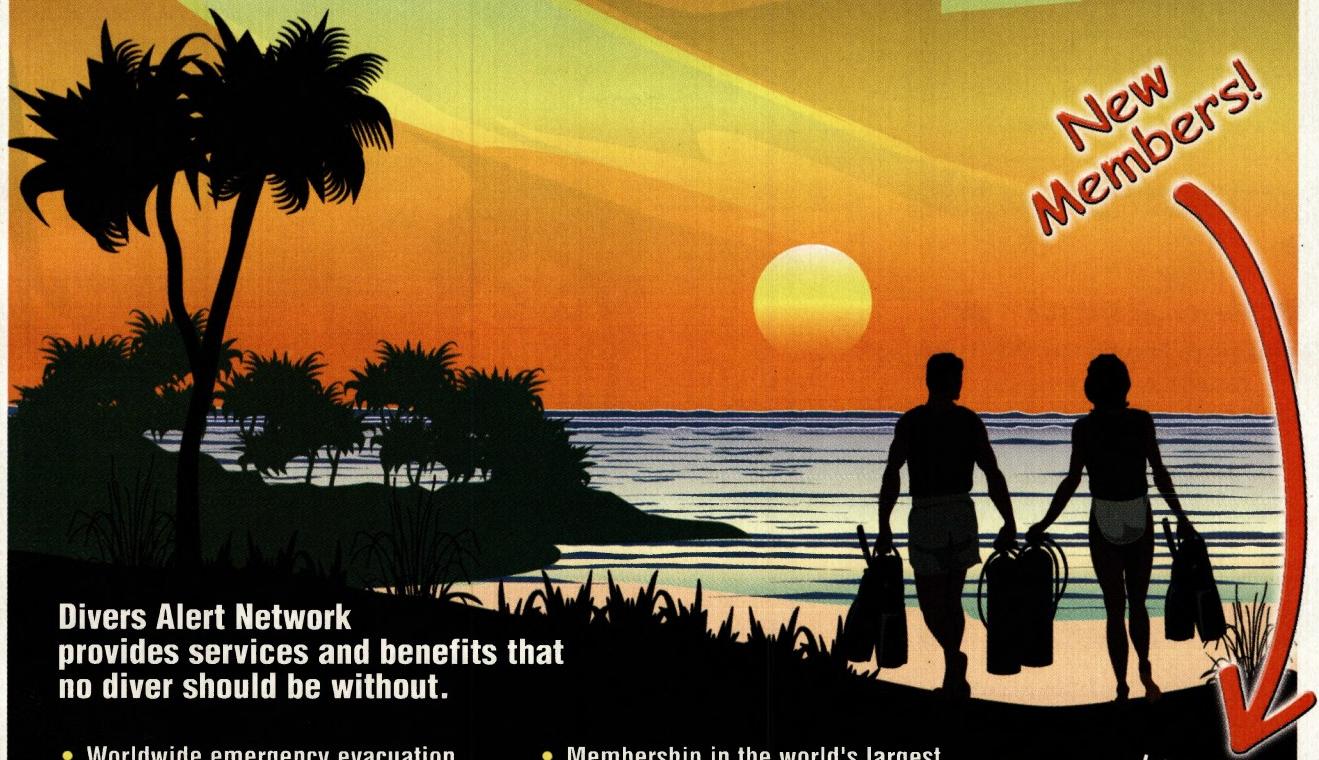
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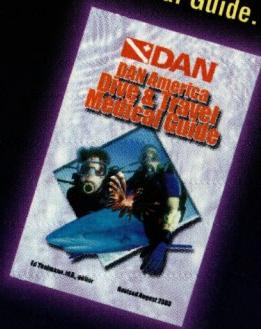
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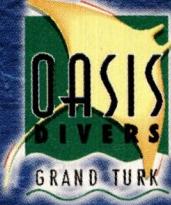


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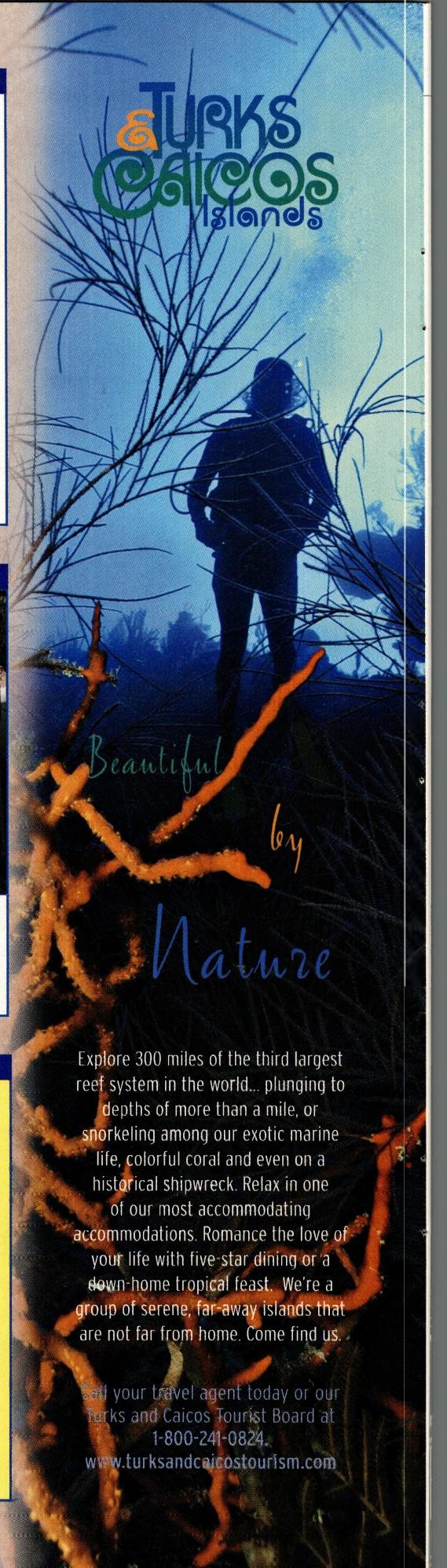

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# Dives

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CANARY ISLANDS

## El Bajon

**IN THE CANARY ISLANDS** archipelago, divers come face-to-face with the volcanic heritage of the island of Hierro, thanks to its convoluted underwater topography. An impressive remnant of the island's fiery birth can be found off Hierro's southeast coast, where the majestic seamount known as El Bajon rises to within 30 feet of the surface. Schools of triggerfish, sea chubs, sea bream and yellowjacks swarm the seamount, while bigger pelagics including amberjacks, tuna and mantas cruise the surrounding open water.

Regularly deposited volcanic ash nurtures the prolific reef off Sangeang Island.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BERKLEY WHITE



( INDONESIA )

## Sangeang Island

**SANGEANG ISLAND HOSTS** one of the most active volcanoes in the Lesser Sundra Islands above water and fragile, enchanting sea gardens below. Sangeang offers the great vis and incredible marine life typical of this area, but the intense black sand backdrop serves to intensify the vivid display of brightly colored fish and invertebrates. Hot vapor bubbles escape intermittently through the seabed and, combined with the rainbow-colored anthias and shallow reefs, create the surreal impression that you're diving in a giant aquarium. Shallow rocky ledges break away to steep, sandy slopes that flatten out around 80 feet. Watch your feet here: The slightest fin-kick can start a sand avalanche.





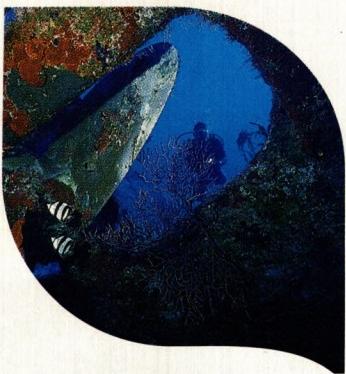
( COZUMEL, MEXICO )

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**GET THERE** > For more information  
on these Great Dives, turn to In Depth, page 98, section 1.

Columbia's varied seascape includes jutting overhangs crowded with a variety of corals and sponges.



## Slip Beneath The Surface

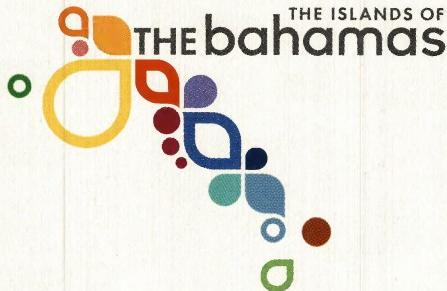
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# Curre



An undersea posse bags  
one of two wayward  
batfish off Key Largo.



# n t s



PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB CARE/FLORIDA KEYS NEWS BUREAU

( CAPTURE )

## Batfish Out of Water

A pair of non-native aquarium fish is nabbed in the Keys.

When divers surveying fish in the Florida Keys for the Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) reported seeing a pair of orbicular batfish, eyebrows definitely raised. "These fish are from the Indo-Pacific," says Lad Akins, REEF's executive director, "so the possibility existed that they'd cause ecological problems by out-competing native fish for food or by carrying diseases they're vulnerable to." Divers soon descended on the reef, captured the pair and sent them to the Florida Aquarium in Tampa. Potential ecological disaster averted, right? Wrong.

These waters off southeastern Florida have become a hotbed of non-native fish. Throughout the other areas REEF surveys—the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, the coasts of the south Atlantic states, the west coast of North America, Hawaii—the number of non-natives reported over the last few years ranges from none to one. Here, though, more than 16 different species have been spotted.

"The correlation between the types of fish imported for the aquarium trade and the types being seen here is very strong," says Brice Semmens, a doctoral candidate at the University of Washington and the lead author of a study on the origins of these fish. "A fish grows too big for its tank or people just can't take care of it anymore. Rather than kill it, they set it free."

REEF is now distributing brochures to local aquarium stores and dive shops explaining the dangers of such releases. "Fortunately, a lot of volunteer divers working with REEF are acting as eyes for scientists who can't be out there themselves," adds Semmens. "Without them, we wouldn't have any idea what was happening." —JERRY SHINE

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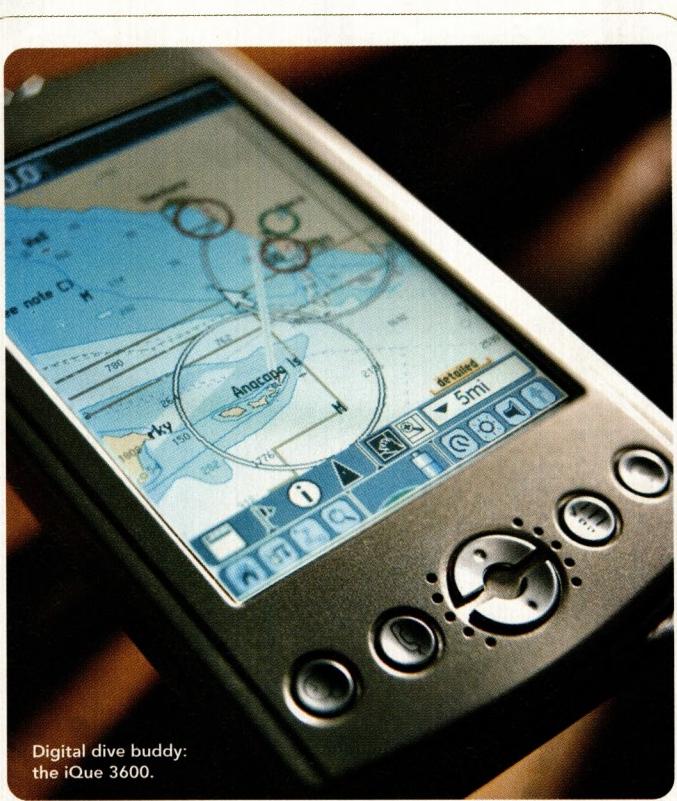
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## CURRENTS



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( GADGET )

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The iQue 3600 is not waterproof, so you'll need to keep it in the cabin. It uses the Palm OS 5 operating system and comes with 32 MB of expandable memory, USB hot-sync cradle, AC adapter and GPS navigation software (complete with street maps, marine charts and voice prompts). Price: \$589. A demo of the SharkPoint software is available as a free download at [www.dreamdives.org](http://www.dreamdives.org). The full version costs \$29.95 for the Palm OS; \$49.95 with companion software for your PC (the iQue 3600 is not compatible with Macintosh computers). —BILL KENDIG

JOSEPH BYRD

# 27,000

( stat )

Number of Ping-Pong balls divers packed into the hull of a sunken 24-foot sailboat in Monterey Harbor in order to raise the vessel. The stunt was pulled off successfully as part of the Discovery Channel's *MythBusters* TV show. "I would not choose this as a method for raising a ship," quipped the show's executive producer Peter Rees. "But it works."

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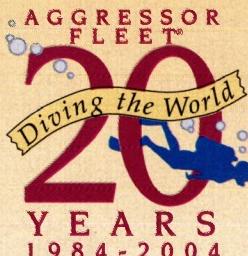


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Jellyfish Lake photo by Doug Sloss

## CURRENTS

### ( BEHAVIOR )

#### The Mr. Mom Strategy

Male sand gobies show fatherhood is sexy.

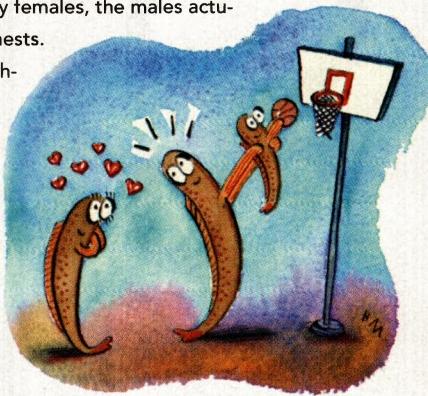
It's well-known, in human circles, that single guys who interact well with kids are considered good catches. Until recently, this courtship behavior—the "Mr. Mom" strategy—had never been documented in animals.

While studying the parenting skills of sand gobies, scientists from the universities of Florida and Helsinki made an astonishing discovery. When female gobies are present, even after courtship and mating has taken place, male gobies try to impress them by displaying good fathering skills.

Until now, the dating habits of sand gobies, which live in the eastern Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, were considered pretty conventional. The females prefer bigger, more colorful males and the males that court them most intensely. But gobies may be more discerning than we imagined. In their observation of 48 male and 72 female gobies, the researchers found that, for fish as for humans, "being a good father is very sexy."

After spawning occurs, male gobies are expected to provide some care for the eggs. When observed by females, the males actually worked harder at building nests.

They diligently fanned the clutch with their pectoral fins, in order to circulate freshly oxygenated water. Most impressive, the observed male gobies managed to curb their baser appetites: They refrained from gobbling up the very eggs they were charged to protect. —JEFF GREENWALD



### ( QUOTE )

**"The plastic on your sandwich really doesn't have to be made to last 50 years.**

—CHARLES MOORE, A MARINE SCIENTIST, ON THE FACT THAT THE RATIO OF PETROLEUM-BASED PLASTIC TO PLANKTON IN THE NORTH PACIFIC IS ABOUT SIX TO ONE.

HAL MAYFORTH



( GAME )

## CACHE FLOW

**Geocaching takes hold under water.**

**Geocaching, a high-tech treasure hunt using new GPS technology, has become the white-hot game of the moment. Estimates indicate that the game—invented just four years ago—now has up to one million players worldwide. In a typical session, a player hides a cache of trinkets, anything from toys to collectibles, and posts the coordinates on the web. Others then set out to find the caches and swap the items.**

Though it began as a terrestrial pastime, Geocaching has recently caught the attention of the scuba set. Now, with a growing number of underwater caches—like the elusive Rapture of the Deep (still unfound after two years), which starts on a wreck, the *Bimini Barge*, and ends on land—search and recovery takes on a whole new meaning. For more information, visit [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) or [www.navicache.com](http://www.navicache.com). —ERIK SHERMAN



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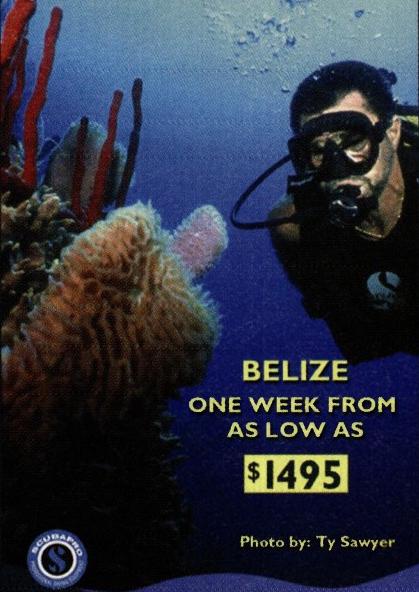
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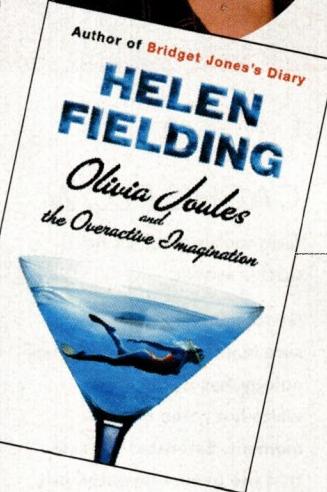


## CURRENTS

( Q & A )

### HELEN FIELDING'S UNDERWATER IMAGINATION

With the phenomenal success of *Bridget Jones's Diary*, Helen Fielding captured the angst and humor of being a single woman in the late '90s. Now, with the publication of her latest novel, *Olivia Joules and the Overactive Imagination* (Viking), Fielding gives us another unforgettable character: a beautiful journalist-turned-spy who scuba dives her way through madcap international adventures.



**Q: What inspired you to make the title character of your new book a scuba diver?**

I am no master diver—Olivia is—but I am mad for diving. And I wanted Olivia, who is essentially an ordinary woman, to have diving as a skill and a hobby, something she could use in this story, which is a spy adventure. When I started the book, it had been a while since I'd last dived and I wrote many of the passages from memory. I wrote things like "... and she took a deep breath and swam straight to the surface." Things that were terribly wrong, things you learn right off are not done. So a year ago I went to the Florida Keys and did a PADI course. And then I realized how many of the diving sections I had to rewrite.

rough water in Florida and got horribly seasick, all over my westsuit, all over the reef. That was more of a Bridget Jones moment than an Olivia Joules one.

**Q: Besides incorporating it into your work, how has diving changed your life?**

Well, a lot of things you learn diving are general rules for life. Like, the worst thing you can do is panic. That makes everything worse in life, too. I also think the buddy system—the idea of complete trust and reliance—applies to life. And isn't there a so-called martini rule about diving? That diving exaggerates the effects of alcohol? There's a connection there, for me: the cover of my book has Olivia diving in a martini glass. And the idea that narcosis clears when you ascend—no hangover—is interesting to me. That would interest my characters, too.

**Q: When did you start diving?**

In Honduras, about 15 years ago. I was a real backpacker, traveling around Central America with a girlfriend. I got a little dive training in Utila, but I didn't get certified. I loved it. I found it so liberating—it's like entering another universe. I did have one bad experience during my training dives, though. I was in some

PIERS FLETCHER

# DAN Introduces Travel Coverage

( PRECAUTION )

Your dive insurance will pay the bills for a major fiasco, but what about those mundane (and much more likely) heartburns: losing your luggage, missing a flight or blowing the whole trip because you sprained your ankle? DAN now completes the insurance package with Trip Insurance. It reimburses a portion of your costs due to flights canceled, delayed or missed; delays. There's also \$10,000 in medical-expense coverage and a 24-hour assistance number for help in rebooking tickets or chasing luggage. The premium is approximately \$63 for every \$1,000 of your trip's total cost. Insurance can be purchased on a trip-by-trip basis and only online. Contact [www.DiversAlertNetwork.org/trip](http://www.DiversAlertNetwork.org/trip). — JOHN FRANCIS

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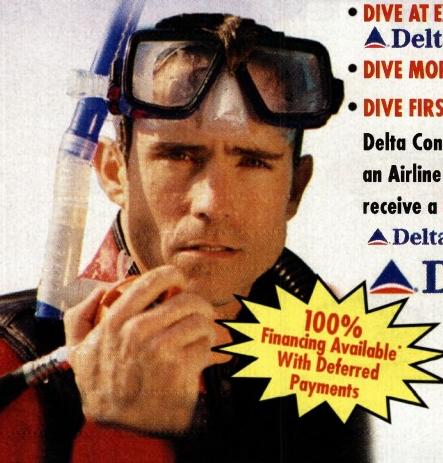
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## LIFE



( FISH ID )

### What's This?

The leathery skin of our chunky mystery fish sets it apart from its prickly relatives and is a clue to its identity, but it is its ingenious rod-and-lure apparatus that is a giveaway to the species' name. This fisherman of fishes has a modified dorsal fin spine that resembles a fishing pole and bait. When not in use, both pole and bait are folded over the top of its head (as in the photo), but when this Australian native is hungry, it wiggles its crustacean-like lure to attract prey. Once the catch-of-the-day has fallen for the fake bait, this clever fish opens its large mouth and sucks in the prey in six thousandths of a second—one of the fastest strikes in the entire animal kingdom.

### *t h e A N S W E R*

SMOOTH ANGLERFISH, *Phyllophryne scortea*

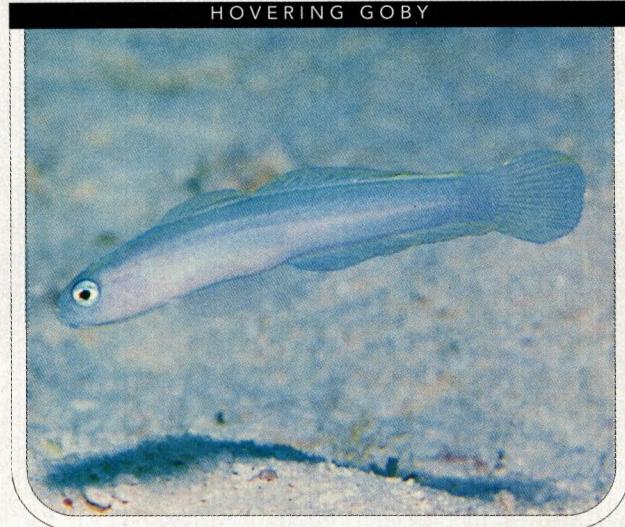
# *the* DIFFERENCE

To most divers, these Caribbean dartfishes are invisible. To spot them, you need to remain still and be patient.

Focusing on a dainty pair of similar-appearing sand-flat gobies from the tropical western Atlantic requires us to think small. Both the hovering goby (*Ptereleotris heleneae*) and the blue goby (*P. calliura*) spend their days suspended just above U-shaped burrows

where they dive when threatened. All family members, the majority of which reside in the Indo-Pacific region, use the same life-sustaining, burrow-darting tactics.

Even though both Caribbean species are about the same size (between two and five inches in length), display similar color patterns and share the same habitat, distinguishing between the two is rather simple. Blue gobies have long, pointed tails and display dark margins on their



dorsal fins. The species also dwells within a rather restricted geographical region

extending from southeastern Florida to the eastern Gulf of Mexico. In contrast, hovering

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gobies sport rounded tails, lack fin markings, and range from the Bahamas and Florida south through the Antilles, and on to Brazil, creating only a narrow area of overlap with the blue goby in southeast Florida and the Keys.

Although the two fairy-like fishes are quite common, they are seldom sighted without a bit of effort. But, of course, that's the fun part. The pair, known as dartfishes, evolved to be invisible and have nearly succeeded. With pearly sheens and refined demeanors, they float like ghosts just above the sand, discreetly picking plankton from passing currents. To spot these cryptic fish, you'll want to get

stationary. Find a spread of sand just out from the reef, lie flat, relax and slowly search the seafloor for movement. Careful scrutiny of even seemingly lifeless patches of bottom invariably reveals little wonders that are lost to roving eyes.

Once you discover one of the wispy little fish, it can be hard to figure out exactly what to call it. Is it a goby? A wormfish? A dartfish? During the past decades, the family has gone through a double transition in classification. Through the ever-evolving intricacies of science, our onetime gobies (*Gobiidae*) have now become dartfishes (*Ptereleotridae*) by way of a subfamily (*Ptereleotri-*



BLUE GOBY  
nae) in the wormfish family  
(*Microdesmidae*). They're still  
commonly referred to as gob-

ies, however. —PAUL  
HUMANN AND NED  
DELOACH

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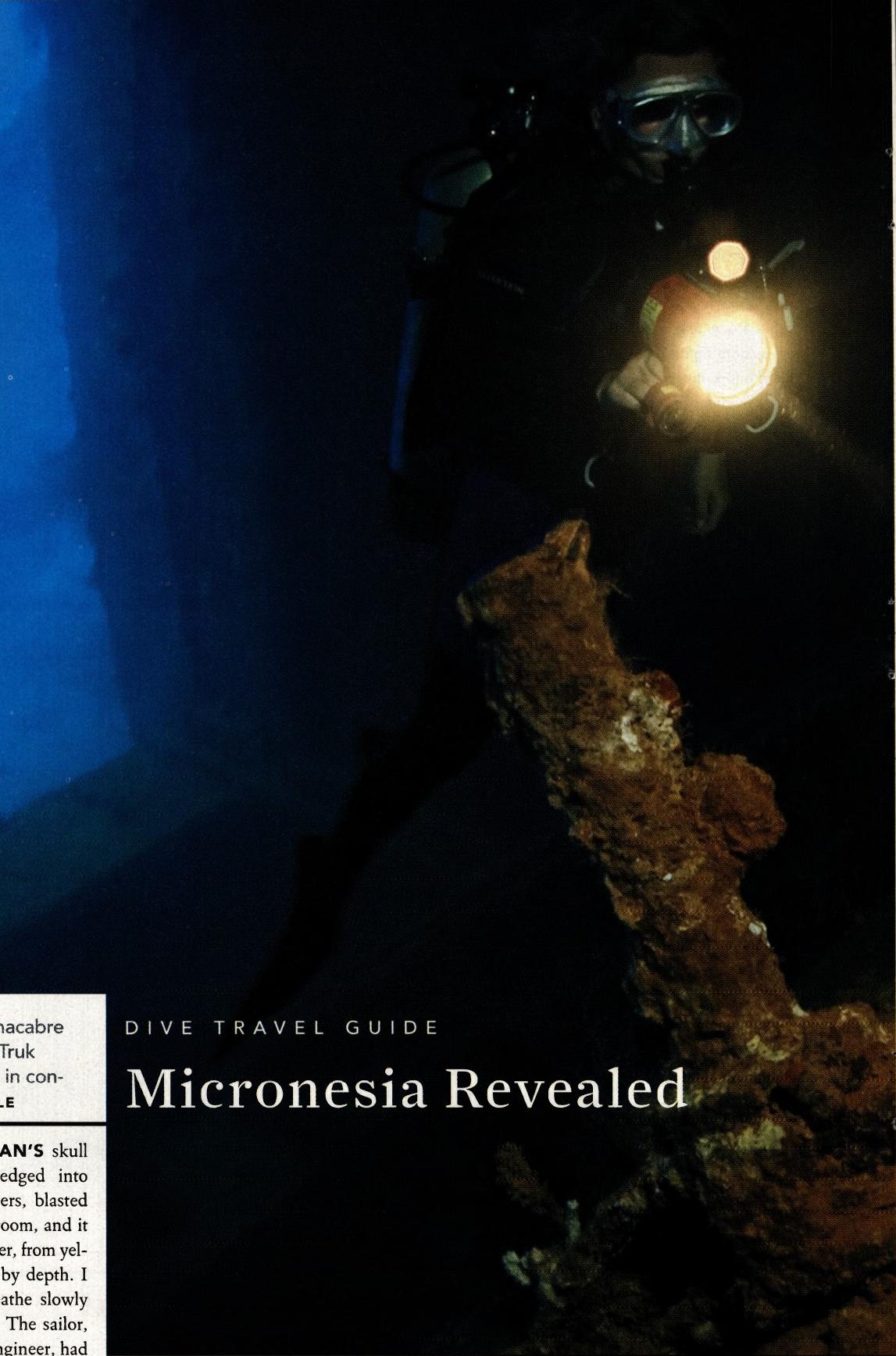
# Micronesia Revealed

Sublime drop-offs and macabre wrecks make Palau and Truk Lagoon a glorious study in contrasts. **BY STEVE CHAPPLE**

**T**HE MAN'S skull was wedged into the crook of two steel girders, blasted into the wall of the engine room, and it stares out at you, 60 years later, from yellow eye sockets, magnified by depth. I swam closer, careful to breathe slowly and smoothly, not to panic. The sailor, some say he was the chief engineer, had

DIVE TRAVEL GUIDE

## Micronesia Revealed



Encrusted machinery fills the No. 5 hold  
of Truk Lagoon's *Yamagiri Maru*.

**MORE MICRONESIA** For everything you need to know to explore the islands of Micronesia, go to **ScubaDiving.com** and select Micronesia from the **TripFinder** menu to get advice on dive operators, hotels and restaurants from the divers who've been there. We have trip reports and photo galleries from veterans and newbies alike.

most likely been thrown back by the force of a 2,000-pound bomb. Only after much time did his body drop away from his head. The water is green in the engine room of the freighter *Yamagiri Maru*, 91 feet down, flecks of algae stirred up by our fins. If we switched off our dive lights, it would be pitch-black.

I put my face almost next to the skull, not out of disrespect, I hope, and I certainly did not want to tempt fate by embedding the image of the man's screaming face in my memory, the way his head had been embedded in the wall. I did it because I just wanted to feel, to understand, what had gone down that day in February 1944 when the Allies, in an attack known as Operation Hailstone, used 30 waves of carrier planes to strike Truk Lagoon, Japan's staging area for much of its Pacific theater. More than 60 major ships and some 250 warplanes were sunk in two days, in a place thought to be impregnable by the Imperial Navy.

**M**y cousin, Rear Admiral Wreford Chapple, took out the first Japanese ship of World War II, the *Hayo Maru*, as a young submariner, 2nd Lt. Captain of the *USS-38*. He once told me how, years after the war was over, he would walk into his bedroom closet in Coronado, Calif., and not stop screaming until his wife woke him up and led him out. Another cousin of mine had been a surgeon, operating in makeshift hospitals constructed under the sands of these islands as the battles raged on the beaches above. You learn to make tough decisions quickly under those conditions. So I looked at these wrecks with a diver's awe—this is the Valhalla of underwater defeats—but also with a mix of emotions, anger and, frankly, finally, a horror for dying this way. Everybody's a hero in death.

We had entered the ship through the torpedo hole 50 feet down on the starboard side—the *Yamagiri Maru* lies to port—and



A skull peers out from the *Yamagiri Maru*, sunk by the Allies in Operation Hailstone.

swam out and under the bridge, back through another blast hole and up the increasingly claustrophobic interior. It was like cave diving, but with more gnarly metal things to hang you up. I checked my hoses, looking up constantly to make sure I was not about to whack my head against the girders. I felt as if I were inside my own video game, spooked but engaged.

We swam out of the engine room's hatch, dive instructor Warren Webster, a former underwater demolitions expert with the British army, covering our rear, and into a rush of filtered light. Webster pointed down. It looked like a jumbled pile of huge lipsticks, but these were 14-inch warheads destined for battleships, and then we began to dodge little blue jellyfish thrown at us by the slight current. We rose over the top of the stern and stared at the single gargantuan propeller forged in phospho-bronze, as valuable today as gold, and then we wafted our way to the surface of the lagoon after safety-stopping for five minutes to off-gas, and in my case, sort out the emotions.

The day had begun with a shakedown dive to the *Shinkoku Maru*, sunny and full of fish and exotic soft corals, as if Wyland, the painter of underwater scenes, had gone goofy and thrown cans of Sherwin-Williams at the 500-foot-long hull. I had noticed the little things at first, anemones and clownfish;



skipjacks hanging in the water like an undulating silver ladder; opal sweepers; angelfish; fluted oysters; *porites* corals, which look like twisted, pocket-sized pipe organs; and sea whips, which I misunderstood to be cables sticking out of the hull, thickened by time. These whips fit well on a shipwreck. And then I came upon the massive bow gun and was reminded that this beautiful sunken reef—artificially sunk, you might say—once supplied oil for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the Battle of Midway, too.



Thick with corals and anemones, the massive *Shinkoku Maru* is the second largest wreck in Truk Lagoon.

*Shinkoku* means “divine country,” a sinister meaning in the winter of 1941, a phrase softened, I think, by the spotted eagle ray trailing me alongside the superstructure this morning, its finely spotted gills flapping like the keys of a syncopated piano.

Strange, all these life forms on a death ship—a tanker on fire, men screaming, caught in holds—now a cheerful nursery for a million reef fish.

Topside, Webster explained that the hanging ladder of skipjacks was defensive in nature. We had not seen the shark that was surely there. We pulled anchor and scooted high-speed through the islands, some steeply mountainous, others almost spongy with canopy forests, in a custom Trukese launch powered by two rowdy 90-horsepower outboards. Maybe it was the residual nitrogen, but the clouds in Micronesia are a psychedelic vision in white: volcanoes of vanilla, space stations of cumulus, whales spouting on the horizon. It was like wearing 3-D glasses while looking up at heaven.

As we drew close to the anchorage for the *Fujikawa Maru*, a rival boat of fishermen, or looters, charged away. We flopped over and floated down, through the cross-deck girders, floor after floor, the wooden decking long gone, till we reached—and it is a phrase that works for me—the bowels of the ship. Then we swam far below the bridge house and into the engine room, where huge piston cylinders, or steam exchangers, sat open like tin cans. We swam relatively quickly, with so much space to cover. The goal was the No. 2 hold, where an intact Zero Fighter lay. The plane was bigger than I had expected, with a wingspan of about 50 feet and two cockpits. I hovered over the copilot’s seat and then, for the first time that day, disturbed something. It was a metal flask twice the size of a Mateus bottle, a flagon in treasure-hunter talk, sitting there on the seat, as if the pilot needed many stiff drinks to go kamikaze, as many reputedly did. I picked up the bottle, only guessing which part of the ship it had really come from, and then gently put it back.

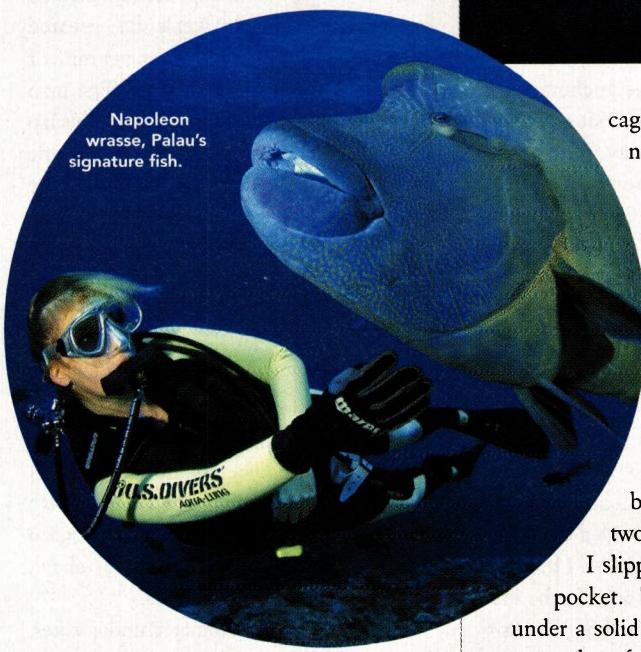
I was down to 1,000 psi. I followed my bubbles to the safety stop. Fifty feet below, Webster suddenly called me back, making the caribou-horn sign for shark, vertical hand on top of head. It was a reef shark, sleek and skittish like a cat, tucking back and forth between open water and Webster’s face. Webster wanted everybody down low and flat. These landlord sharks are usually no big deal, but getting flat, to decking or reef, Webster would tell me later, was a safety measure, because in his experience sharks prefer to attack from below. Paranoia in the service of safety is no vice, I say. We emerged a few minutes later, the shark hanging like a gray suit off in deep water.

On the 737 back to Guam for the transfer to Palau, I sat next to a turtle hunter from Yap. He told me that each week he speared three hawksbills, receiving \$400 per turtle. I took this as a bit of a fish story. The man wore a lei around his forehead and in his lap cradled a palm purse encrusted with cowrie shells. He sported many tattoos and, in the little basket, a supply of green betel nuts. Pulling out a small curved knife (questions about airport security crossed my mind), he carved a couple of nuts and offered me some. Betel gives clarity and a little kick, he said in as many words, but I didn’t break a sweat. I stared long at the stewardess, to test the clarity claim. She looked as pretty after chewing as she had before, but not any better. Later I was told I should not have declined the powdered lime and tobacco mix, which was part of the ritual chaw, because lime activates the betel.

Best not to be too animated under water, I think. Next morning by 9 a.m., I was surfing the wall at New Drop-Off, 70 feet down, feeling like a Buddha sitting in a blue sofa chair, my fingers folded and pointed, floating on the open aquarium’s conveyor belt. I moved past stiff red branching fans, peacock groupers, anemones and clownfish, endless

schools of snapper. Occasionally a white-tip shark lolled up from the gathering blue, cat-eyed and bored. Until the last few minutes, however, this seemed to be a place for macro and corals. I made a game of hunting wormy nudibranchs, oily bits of undulating brush-strokes only a few inches long, as wild in color as tree frogs in a rain forest. As I was coming up, I watched two white-tips chomp at least one snapper, a fairly rare daytime feed. A sluggish Napoleon wrasse smoothed over for missed chunks.

The place for the big stuff proved to be Blue Corner, which I dived the next afternoon. We did German Channel first, in the morning. German Channel has a safe, sandy bottom. I got to observe a turtle-feeding station, where a three-foot remora sucked the back of a hawksbill; I also saw a cranberry-red leaf-fish camouflaged in the coral and two feather-tailed stingrays, six-



foot strange guys with raised, stealth-bomber skulls and tired-man eyes. The stingrays were cuddling, or something more fun, or else sleeping. I am not yet an expert on the lower chordates.

At lunch we snorkeled around a wire

cage stuffed with chambered nautiluses that had been baited with chicken carcasses and brought up from about 450 feet. These elegant ochre-and-white-shelled fossils have survived from the time land was water.

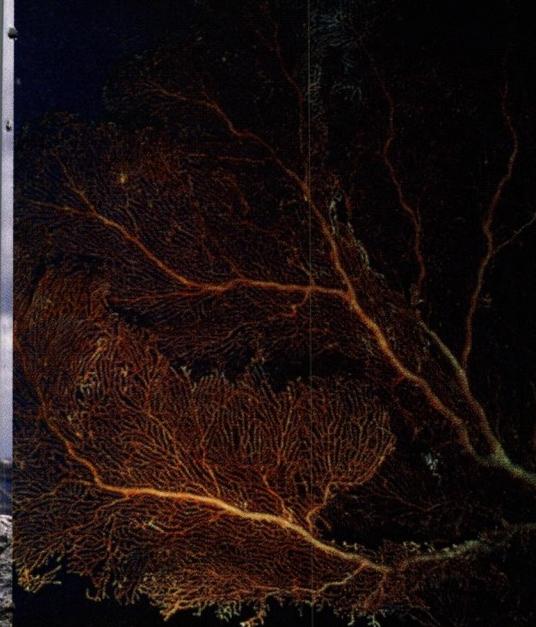
Then it was time for the Corner, which many consider to be one of the best dives in the world. As two gray reef sharks looked up, I slipped my reef hook from my pocket. The simple hook snugs under a solid hunk of dead coral at the current edge of the drop-off, and you hold onto a few feet of parachute cord, kiting around the pivot point, after puffing a little air into your BC. I felt like an alien hooking onto the projection house at a drive-in movie theater, watching the show all around: gray reef sharks, white-tips, drifting mantas, esca-

lators of barracuda. The sharks were here, I was told, not to feed but to conserve energy and gain easy oxygen, riding the currents the way hawks surf thermals. At nightfall, the real killing would begin.

A Napoleon wrasse eyed me up close. Napoleons, one of the signature fish in Palau, have jerky chameleon eyes that snap-snap around in their sockets. They are up to seven feet long, a sort of muddy neon green, with protruding chins. Their sad, blasé eyes could melt the heart of all but a chef. Smuggled Napoleons command \$60 a pound in Hong Kong and are a popular menu item in Koror, the capital of Palau. At the Dragon Tei restaurant, for instance, the tasty Napoleon can be had poached, sautéed or fried in chunks with cheese, "Heidi style." I opted for snapper the night I was there, because the alternative would have been like eating the family dog, if your dog were a giant Newfoundland.

On the way back to the dock at Malakal Harbor on Koror, we stopped by Jellyfish

NORBERT WU (TOP); TIM ROCK (LEFT)



At the famed Blue Corner, count on masses of iridescent fish like this swirl of jacks.

Lake, one of 70 marine lakes and coves in the Rock Islands scattered about Palau's southern lagoon. Here, millions of *mastigias* jellyfish appear to have lost their sting, and it was like bathing in a tub of clear tapioca. There were cardinalfish and gobies, and hundreds of tourists from Taiwan in life jackets, too. Some could not swim, and many screamed and coughed through their snorkels.

Before dinner, I went for a two-hour paddle to the mouth of the more open ocean. Rocketing by in a dive boat, the mushroom-shaped Rock Islands seem scalloped at the waterline with a butter knife, which is why they appear to float so ethereally. But up close, by kayak, I could see that these cuts were deep, four to six feet, and sometimes as tall. It's not the tide but bio-erosion, constant nibbling by chitins and sponges and hungry mollusks, that carves the indentations. Inside, past shallow, encrusted entrance reefs, I discovered that some of these islands held lakes where flat corals grew wondrously large, protected from tidal action.

TIM ROCK

I also explored some amusing bars on Koror. For the bohemian sailor in us all, there's Kramer's, with its world-class drunken intellectuality; the Marina, should you wish to cool off with a night dive 10 feet from the tables; or the Storyboard, for guilelessly obscene wood carvings the length of the bar. But, for the nitrogen-sated, which is half the town, it's hard to stay up past nine.

**T**he next morning, I cabbed over to the Palau Pacific Resort, where, unknown to most military historians, Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf once came inches away from being assassinated by a falling coconut, according to a cameraman friend who happened to be seated nearby. This day, I wanted to have breakfast with Al Giddings, the underwater director of photography for *Titanic* and consultant to the upcoming MGM picture, *Into the Blue*, who was in Palau to host the second Underwater Photo Festival. I thought he might provide a straight answer about that skull—you remember—the one 91 feet down in the engine room of the *Yamagiri Maru*.

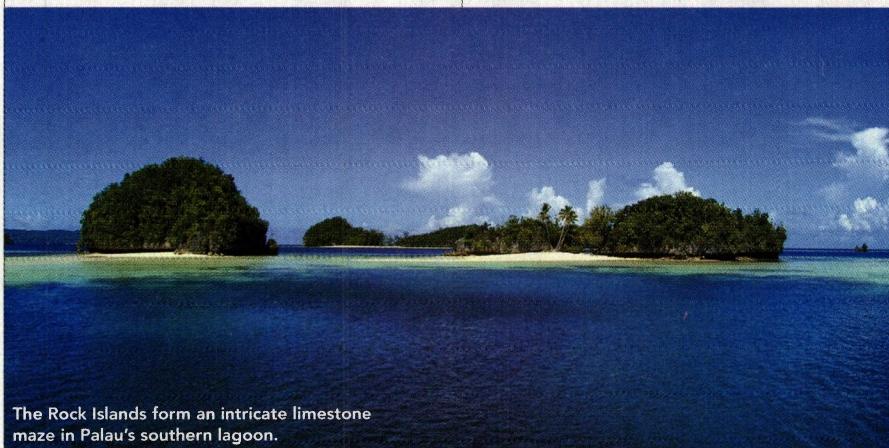
The thought had crept up on me, after a week's diving, that maybe the old skull, which was certainly real, had nevertheless been "salted"; that is, brought up from another part of the ship, or from another wreck, to thrill naive writers. Could be that the killing joke was on me.

"No," smiled Giddings, who is a thick-

bodied, measured-speaking man in his 60s. "There's been some of that, but a ship would go down, and if there was any air trapped, the bodies could wind up in all sorts of positions, based on tide and other factors. When we first entered the *I-169* submarine in Truk Lagoon 40 years ago, about 60 of the Japanese crew had ended up in the engine room. We went through the hatches, and the whole top of the diesels was full of the remains of the crew. So your skull could have found its way there naturally."

Two days later, at dawn, I hopped a bush plane for Ngaur, an isolated southern island. The pilot was a jolly, barefoot fellow who chewed betel and made a perfect landing on the gravel runway. We saw dugongs, rare manatee-like creatures, on the way down, and, later, monkeys trapezing through the ohia trees; relatively giant clams right in the small harbor; and big monitor lizards scampering over the grave markers of the Japanese war dead. That night, I hunted geckos and tree boas with a scientist from the Smithsonian who was in the islands collecting specimens. Next morning I flew back home, via Palau and Guam. Someone told me a story about two tourists who scheduled only two days in Palau. They were crying when they got back on their plane. They couldn't bear to leave. I left smiling. But I'll be back.

**GET THERE >** For more information on Micronesia, turn to In Depth, page 99, section 2.



The Rock Islands form an intricate limestone maze in Palau's southern lagoon.



A diver encounters a scorpionfish at the site known as The Breakers.

# Going for the Gold Coast

From almost anywhere in Florida's Palm Beach County, it's a short hop to gorgeous reefs and thrilling wrecks awash in rich Gulf Stream waters. Just jump in and catch the drift. **BY BUCKY MCMAHON**

**I**T'S A SIZZLING June morning in South Florida, heat index hovering at one-oh-six, blinding sunlight bouncing off eight lanes of snarling traffic on I-95, the talk radio jocks blathering about who's the sexiest local news broadcaster.

Talk about being primed for a dive. Please, somebody submerge me! Fortunately, once I exit the interstate rat race at Blue Heron Boulevard in West Palm Beach, I'm only 15 minutes from the sanctuary of Riviera Beach Marina, home to more than a dozen commercial dive boats and the unofficial capital of Palm Beach County diving. Stowing my gear aboard the *Narcosis*, I feel nearly intoxicated with relief—and not just from the heat. I'm on dive time now, kicked back and ready to go with the flow.

The flow of which I speak is, of course, the Gulf Stream. That wide and mighty current runs closer to shore here in Palm Beach County, where Florida bulges eastward out to sea, than anywhere else on the U.S. mainland. That means year-round warm water, plenty of nutrients for a panoply of critters and near-instant gratification for us divers. Five minutes out of the Lake Worth Inlet—with the smokestack-studded skyline of the port of Palm Beach behind us and the beachfront mansions of Palm Beach arrayed to the south—Captain Ray Davis, burly and jolly as a seafaring Santa Claus, is already powering the big Pro-Line 48 into the blueberry-hued swells of the Gulf Stream, while divemaster Susan Gardner begins to brief us for the first dive.

The drill here in Palm Beach County is all drift diving all the time, an effortless game of follow-the-leader. Susan, who's petite, wiry and fit, will carry a reel rigged to a dive float, and the boat will simply follow the float to retrieve us downstream. She goes over a few basic drift diving dos and don'ts. Don't grab the float line, please, when descending or ascending, or during your 15-foot safety stop. If you're separated from the group, don't get a wild hair and swim any great distance east or west. And do let the current carry you north; that's where the captain will be looking for you.

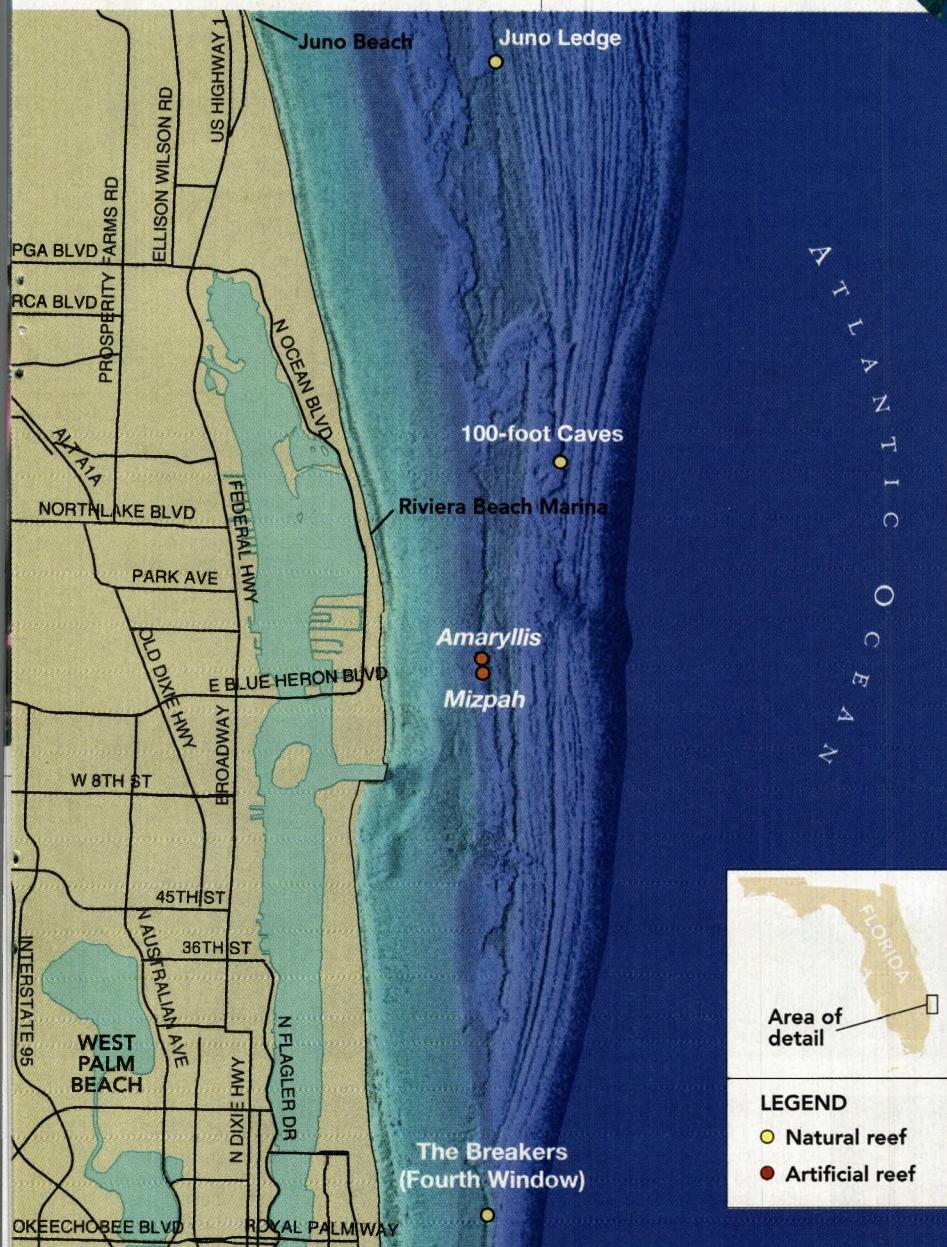
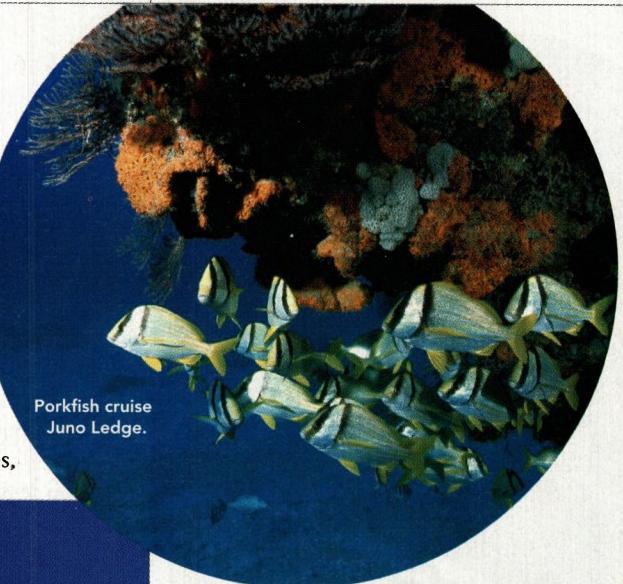
When large groups drift dive, it's important for everybody to be ready to hit the water in rapid sequence (kind of like in an Esther Williams aquatic dance number), so the group won't be too dispersed by the cur-

MAP (RIGHT) COURTESY OF PALM BEACH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PAUL OSMOND (LEFT); WALT STEARNS (FAR RIGHT)

rent. But on this weekday morning there are only five of us—counting Susan, but not including Ray's yellow lab, Bailey—and everyone except me is an old hand at drift diving. Another diver by the name of Wade, a well-traveled 50-something and a self-styled professional avoider of work, is a keen amateur underwater photographer and local diving enthusiast. Though he lives some two hours from the Riviera Beach Marina, Wade says it's not just convenience that draws him

here time and again. "For sheer variety of sites—whether it's wrecks or reefs—and the amount of sea life, this place compares favorably with anywhere in the Caribbean," he explains.

My appetite is certainly whetted by the time Captain Ray cuts the engine and cries,

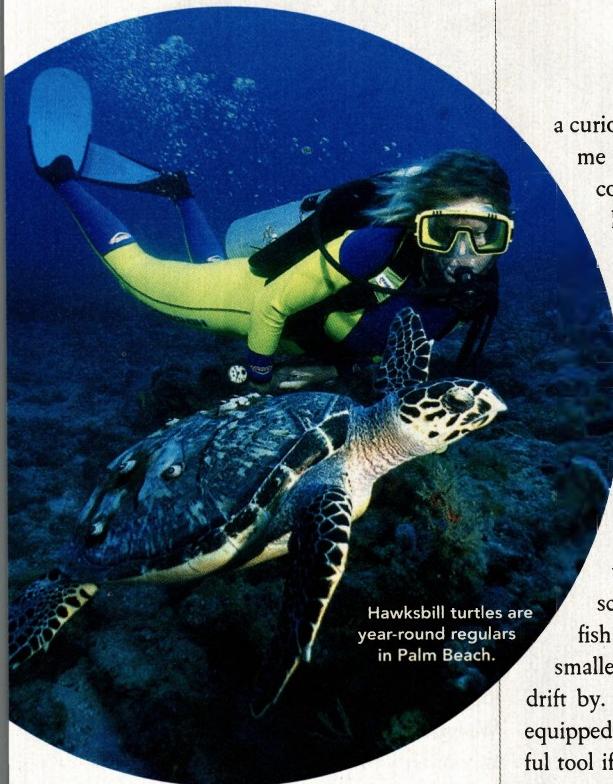


"Dive! Dive! Dive!" (a bit of drift-diving drama). Bailey commences whining and tugging at his leash, wanting to go in too. We fin-slap to the dive platform in a reasonably orderly procession—and then it's just hop, drop and zoom.

The Gulf Stream is a one-way street—due north—but dive boats usually take a vote to decide which direction to head for. South of the inlet and its breakwater, the sites are shallower, more lushly coraliferous, with less current and generally better vis—ideal for novices. Sites to the north are deeper, with more current and less reliable clarity, but they offer greater odds of spotting big pelagics. Because the continental shelf is a mere sliver off Palm Beach, either way it's never necessary to go far to sea. We opted to go north, hugging the coast for five miles up to Juno Beach, to dive the eponymous Juno Ledge. It's 90 feet to the sand bottom and about 80 to the top of the sponge-encrusted ridge, where I see Susan, with her mismatched yellow and blue fins, reel in one hand, video camera in the other, pointing out a cruising hawksbill.

From April to June the beaches here are prime nesting grounds for green, leatherback, loggerhead and hawksbill turtles; the latter two species are common year-round in these waters and remarkably habituated to their human admirers. While I'm peering into a cubbyhole atop the ledge,

## DRIVE & DIVE



a curious loggerhead windmills up to me to see what's so interesting. It comes so close I can't resist lightly passing my hand along its barnacle-buttoned back. Though it's a wilderness out here in the Stream, it seems to me that these are partly urban turtles, bold as pigeons.

This morning the current is brisk but not fierce. Point into it, and a leisurely kick will hold you in place—which is exactly what the dense schools of grunts are up to, every fish facing south, hoping something smaller and tastier than a diver will drift by. Wade, the photographer, has equipped himself with a reef hook, a useful tool if you're shooting macro or just

want to hang out and let the action come to you. The rest of our group uses fin power or fingerholds in the rock to observe a basking nurse shark pup, a newly minted five-foot beauty that's quite camera-friendly.

While our dive plan is to cruise Juno Ledge for a mile or so, more ambitious Palm Beach dives link sites from south to north—say, from the wreck of the 185-foot Greek luxury liner, the *Mizpah*, to the 440-foot Liberty ship, the *Amaryllis*; or from the *Amaryllis* to the 100-foot Caves, a series of deeply undercut ledges. There are even some underwater trails made of spaced concrete blocks to help divers connect the dots. As a representative dive, though, Juno Ledge provides plenty of variety, especially considering what I somehow managed to miss. After Captain Ray picks us up, I hear a typical

WALT STEARNS (LEFT & RIGHT)



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The Breakers resort, a Palm Beach landmark since 1896.

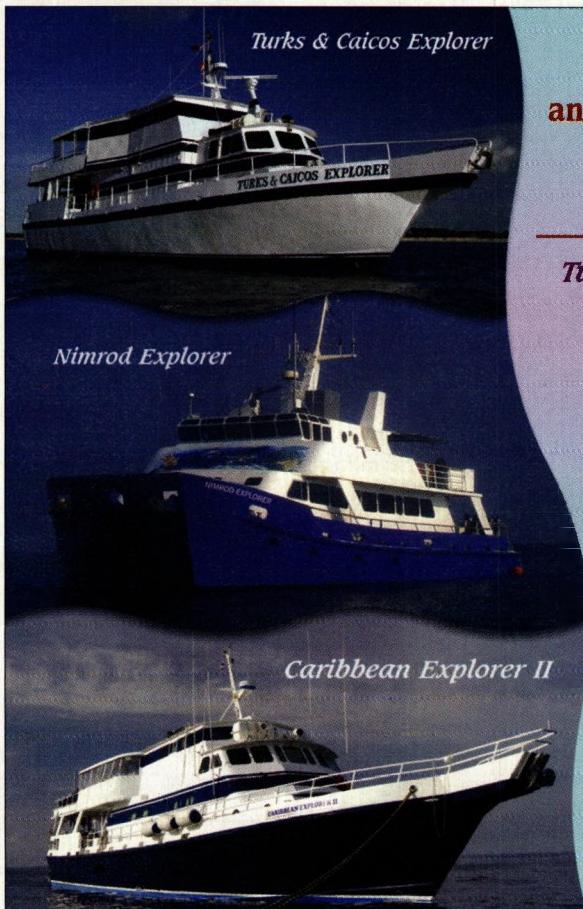
chorus of "Did you see?" That reef shark? The king mackerel? The eagle ray? The Goliath grouper? Turns out that big guy, a two-hundred pounder, is a Juno Ledge regular. You just have to know where to look. As always, experience counts for a lot.

We spend most of our surface interval

motoring south to see how the other half dives off ritzy Palm Beach. As we near the shallower site, Wade explains the unique local method of navigation based on the famous Breakers Hotel and a certain tall smokestack in the port of Palm Beach: "See that dark chimney? Now count four windows over on the top floor.

When the two line up you're at Fourth Window. Line up with the elevator shaft and that's Elevator Shaft." Captain Ray cuts the engines smack in front of the Breakers and we dive, yes, The Breakers.

We drop down into a gentle south-bound eddy in the Gulf Stream and through a deliciously chilly thermocline,



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Wytold Lebing, November 2003

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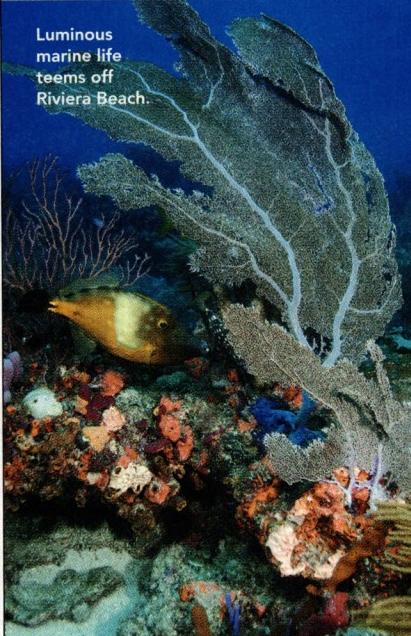
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Package prices reflect low season travel dates, blackout dates apply. Contact these partners for details.

visible as a kind of wavering water-line that dips and rises with the contours of the 40-foot-deep reef. Cold-natured and wearing just a dive skin, I spend most of the dive hovering on the margin, storing warmth and then dipping down to eyeball a green moray in its hidey-hole, or a casually cruising queen angelfish, or to follow yet another hawksbill turtle. Lush with sea fans, hard and soft corals, teeming with tropicals, their colors brilliant in the summer sunshine, this is a beautiful site—and just minutes from the Riviera Beach Marina dock.

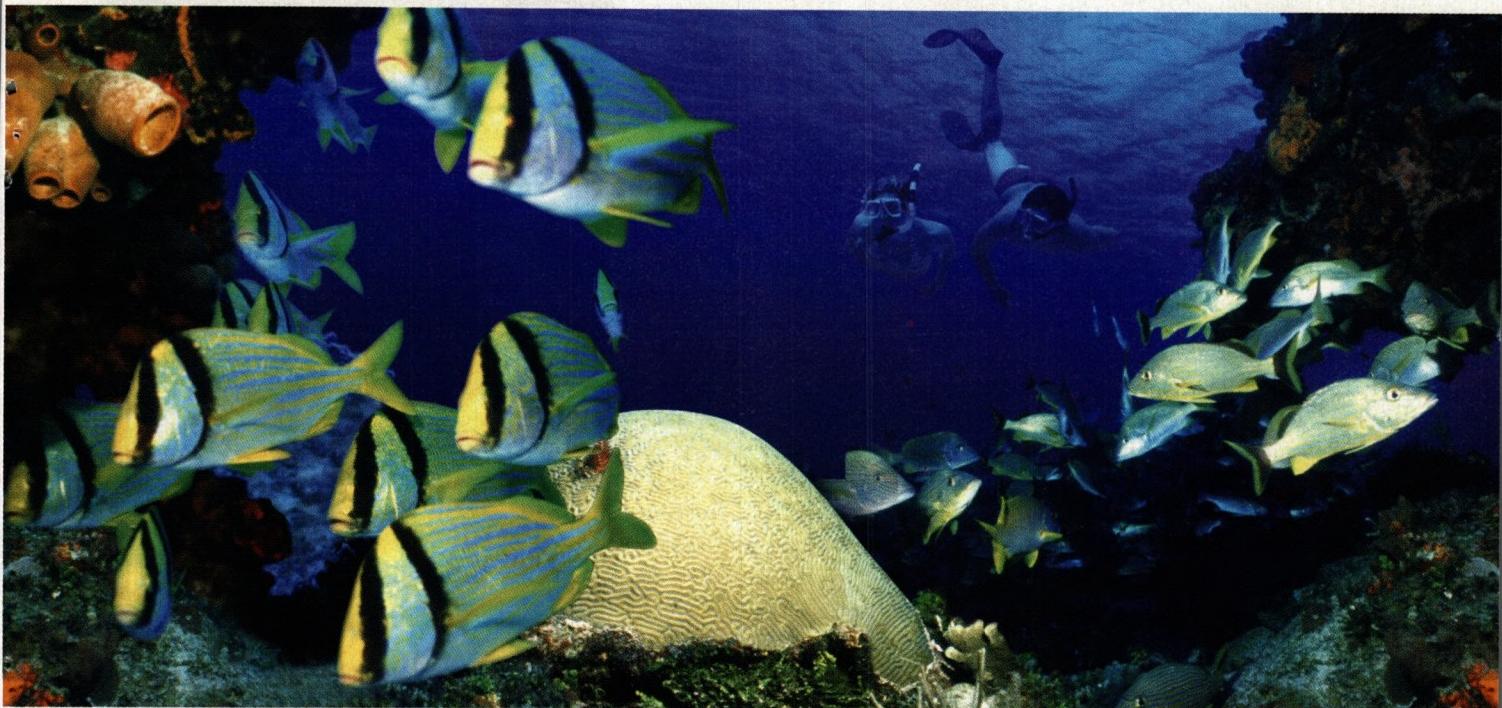
That means that all too soon I'm back in my car, and back in the rush of I-95 traffic. Cranking up the AC, I'm reminded of that thermocline and reflect that, after all, these north-bound lanes are a kind of Gulf Stream in their own right. For the moment, anyway, I'm utterly imperturbable, totally rejuvenated—which is what recreational diving is all about.

SD

**GET THERE >** For more  
information  
on Palm Beach County, turn to In  
Depth, page 99, section 3.

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## Top 10 Destinations for Marine Life

**N**OT SURPRISINGLY, many of the places that made our top 10 list for best overall dive destinations also came out on top in the abundant marine life category. Our readers obviously value a healthy and prolific ecosystem. Make your next dive trip to any one of these 10 destinations, and we guarantee you'll see quite a lot.

( SCORE: 100 )

### 1 Papua New Guinea

**IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO DO** justice to the profuse marine life found in Papua

New Guinea, 600 coral-reef-rimmed islands spread across the Bismarck, Solomon and Coral seas. PNG's waters support a galaxy of fish (about 900 species) and coral (more than 400 species), a biodiversity that is among the



Papua New Guinea's waters shelter about 900 species of fish, including the false clown anemonefish.

richest on the planet. From tiny nudibranchs to the world's biggest fish, the whale shark, divers encounter a stunning array of exotic species on dive sites

STEPHEN FRINK

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Diver magazine, Great Britain  
April, 2004



**"The Best New Regulators"**  
Rodale's Scuba Diving magazine  
November, 2003

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that include barrier reefs, walls, patch reefs, fringing reefs, sea grass beds and coral atolls. Two areas popular with divers are showcases for PNG's plentiful sea life. One is north of the Papuan mainland, in the Bismarck Sea off New Britain, where the shallow tops of a string of volcanic seamounts are crowded with red sea whips, pink sea fans, and huge barrel and elephant ear sponges, while their steep sloping sides are home to anemones, clownfish, batfish and sweetlips. The seamounts create a pocket of calm water, a refuge for giant schools of jacks, chevron barracudas, snappers, surgeonfish and oceanic triggerfish. Another area favored by divers is in the Solomon Sea's Milne Bay, where scattered islands and reef systems are home to a bonanza of reef fish like damsels, lionfish, cardinalfish and

striped snapper. PNG is also home to exceptional muck diving, with blue ribbon eels, devil scorpionfish, twin spot gobies, pipefish, crocodilefish, garden eels, seahorses and harlequin ghost pipefish among the star performers.

( TIE )

### **British Columbia**

**IT'S ONLY POSSIBLE** to give an abridged version of the biodiversity found in the teeming North Pacific waters of British Columbia. B.C.'s 17,000 miles of coastline are home to more than 5,000 species of invertebrates, nearly 400 species of fish and a great abundance of algae and kelp. The southern tip of Vancouver Island may be unmatched for its combination of diverse invertebrate life and marine mammals.

Shallow forests of bull kelp shelter juvenile rockfishes and sea urchins. More than 1,000 California and Steller's sea lions congregate on the rocky islets in the fall, while several hundred harbor seals live in these waters year-round. The rocky reefs off the west coast of Vancouver Island are riddled with gullies, providing a home to wolf eels. The variety of rockfish found in B.C. is exceptional; on a single dive a diver can spot china, black, blue, yellowtail, tiger, copper, quillback, vermillion, canary and yelloweye rockfish. At the north end of Vancouver Island lies Queen Charlotte Strait, a broad channel that includes some of the richest dive sites in B.C. The reef here supports a dense thicket of wiry tree kelp, a three- to six-foot-tall seaweed that thrives in the Strait's exposed conditions.

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**"Second to None"** Sport Diver magazine  
August, 2003

**"The SS1 breathes better than many primary-use regulators** and generated the **best overall simulator performance** among the integrated inflator/reg...and earned **the highest ergonomic scores** of all the units we tested."

**"Better Alternatives"** Rodale's Scuba Diving magazine  
Scubalab, Jan/Feb 2004

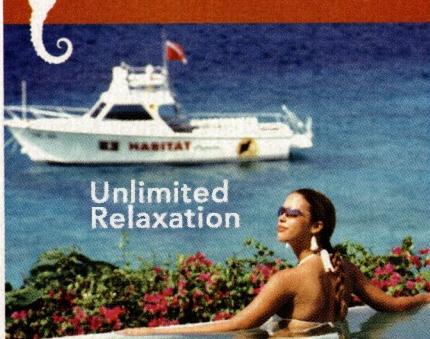


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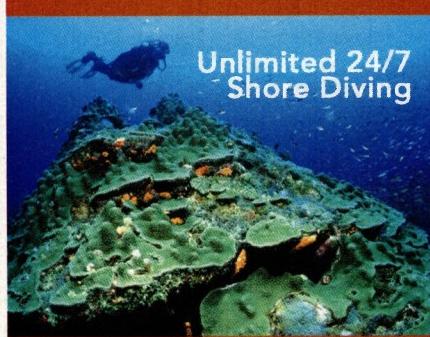


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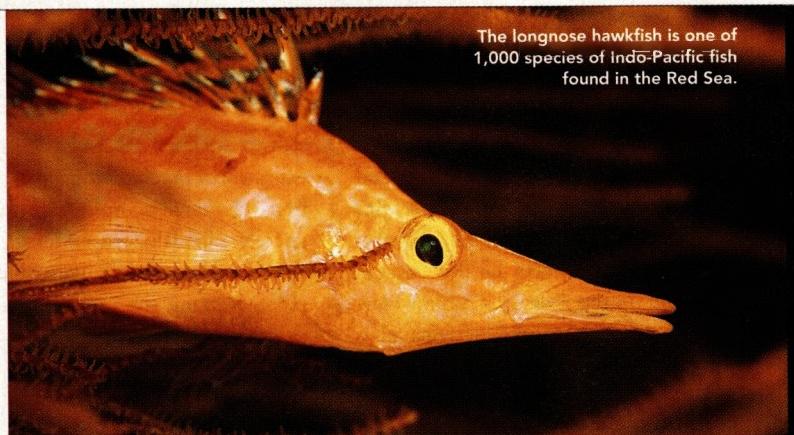
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## READER RATINGS



The longnose hawkfish is one of 1,000 species of Indo-Pacific fish found in the Red Sea.

( SCORE: 98.1 )

### 3 Palau, Micronesia

#### RIMMED BY A BARRIER REEF

that separates shallow reef lagoons from sheer walls, the 340 islands of Palau shelter a rich marine ecosystem. No destination can be everything to every diver, but Palau comes pretty close. The limestone Rock Islands illustrate Palau's biodiversity: mangrove forests and rivers, landlocked marine lakes thick with jellyfish, saltwater lagoons that serve as nurseries for juvenile fish and walls where fish from tiny anthias to reef sharks hang out. The current at famed sites like Blue Corner sweeps in a swirling circle of life—plankton gets caught up in the vortex attracting baitfish and, in turn, jacks, tuna and sharks.

( SCORE: 96.3 )

### 4 Yap, Micronesia

**YAP'S REPUTATION** as the most consistent destination for manta sightings often overshadows its other diving attributes. Yap's southern tip is home to lionfish, clownfish and their anemone hosts, white-tip reef sharks, Napoleon wrasses and hawksbill sea turtles. Big pelagics like dolphins, scalloped hammerheads, pilot whales and tuna cruise

the deep sloping walls here. Mandarinfish can be found at several dive sites, especially at dusk. It is the mantas, however, that divers often come to see, and they congregate in huge numbers near cleaning stations at sites like Mi'il Channel. Many operators offer planned encounters with these graceful giants.

( SCORE: 95.8 )

### 5 Egyptian Red Sea

**PERPETUAL SUNSHINE**, warm water and a captive collection of Indo-Pacific marine life make the Red Sea a favorite of divers from all over the world. With the northern-most fully developed reef system on the planet, the Red Sea is home to 1,000 species of marine life. For many divers, the best diving is found on coral ergs, pinnacles that offer shallow coral gardens swarmed by tropical fish and deep coral walls tended by massive pelagics like sharks. Some of the fish you'll see on the pinnacle tops include the map angelfish, Red Sea bannerfish and jewel fairy basslets in enormous schools. Unicornfish are found on the edge of drop-offs. Napoleon wrasses, named for the hat-like hump on their foreheads, are found on deeper reefs. Search the sand bottoms carefully for the weird-looking crocodilefish.

( SCORE: 93.9 )

**6 Bonaire**

**BONAIRE'S UNIQUE** position just north of Venezuela and just south of the Caribbean's hurricane belt accounts for the island's spectacularly diverse reef life. Fish and coral embryos travel on the ocean's surface for hundreds of miles from South America and settle on the reef here. Bonaire's reefs are so jammed with life that it's easy even for beginners to notice behavior on the reef. In the morning, the reef bustles with early risers like foureye butterflyfish, blue tangs and yellowtail snappers intent on looking for food or protecting nests. At night, divers use lights to illuminate the extended tentacles of feeding corals. The lights also attract monster tarpon looking to score an easy meal.

( SCORE: 93.3 )

**7 Channel Islands, Calif.**

**THIS UNSPOILED CHAIN** of eight islands off the coast of Ventura, Calif., shelters blue whales, sea lions and a number of nesting birds. The vast beds of kelp that make up the Channel Islands' habitat is like a tropical jungle with a thick canopy, a three-dimensional, sun-filtered world populated by hundreds of different species, including juvenile sheepshead, kelp bass and opaleye. Eye-catching garibaldi flit about like brilliant jungle birds. If you like small creatures, look for colorful nudibranchs clinging to the kelp fronds. The king of the kelp forest is the sea lion. You stand an excellent chance of an encounter with these playful animals off Santa Barbara's rookeries.

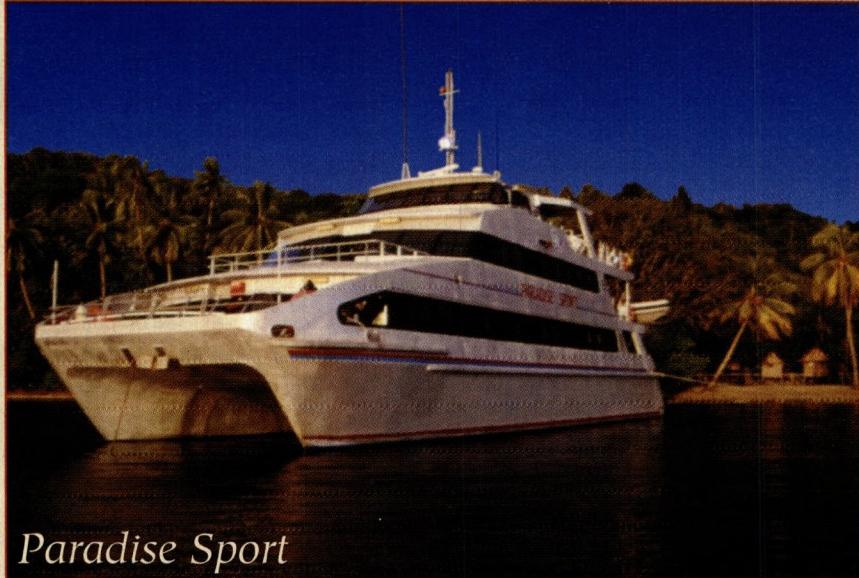
( SCORE: 92.3 )

**8 French Polynesia**

**THE SCATTERED ISLANDS** and atolls of the five archipelagos of French Polynesia are South Pacific outposts for apex predators like lemon, gray, white-tip and black-tip sharks that school in large numbers and weirdly wonderful fish like star puffers, Moorish idols and the venomous lionfish. Also common in these islands are some of the South Pacific's prettiest fish, including damselfish, surgeonfish, triggers, angels and butterflyfish. Among the most popular places for diving in this vast area are in two of the island groups, the Society Islands, which includes Tahiti, Moorea and Bora Bora, and the Tuamotus, a collection of classic coral atolls.

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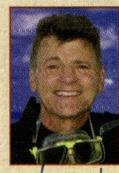
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## DIVE DRY



photo: Rudi Asseer  
diver: Kim Martin, training session for Empress of Ireland Expedition 2004  
suit: 7mm compressed neoprene COM10

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## READER RATINGS

( SCORE: 88.6 )

## 9 Grand Turk and Salt Cay, Turks & Caicos

THESE TWO ISLANDS in the Turks chain are just a 10-minute puddle-jumper flight from each other. In both Grand Turk and Salt Cay, the dive sites are scattered along the islands' protected lees, coral gardens in the emerald-green shallows that lead to walls that plunge into the deep blue. On the reef top are bluestriped grunts, dusky damselfish, parrotfish and queen triggerfish. Look for hawksbill turtles under coral ledges. The walls are tattooed with massive orange elephant ear sponges and springy black wire coral.

( TIE )

## Southeast Florida

SOUTH FLORIDA'S Gold Coast—Palm Beach, Broward and Dade counties—stretches from Jupiter in the north to Biscayne Bay in the south. Between those two points, the Gulf Stream endows the three reef lines running parallel to shore with an explosion of marine life. Palm Beach's limestone ledges and wrecks attract cobia, barracuda, rays, occasional sharks and loggerhead turtles. Off Broward County, giant amberjack are found on the outer reef during spring, and bluestriped grunts, jacks and barracuda frequent the area's many wrecks. Southernmost Dade County features a Caribbean-influenced reefscape that is home to blue hamlets, yellow coneys and spotted drum, plus wrecks that are visited by huge schools of horse-eye jacks and grunts. SD

# Dive More, Pay Less

We've found 13 dive travel bargains from Hawaii to the Cayman Islands.

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### Special Rate, *Mahalo*

**1 THE DEAL:** Dive Oahu's south, east and west shores with Reef Trekkers and get three days of diving, six dives total, including three different shipwrecks. Mention *Scuba Diving* for the \$225 rate and a free T-shirt. Offer is valid through Jan. 31, 2005. (877-359-7333, [www.reeftrekkers.com](http://www.reeftrekkers.com))

## BARBADOS

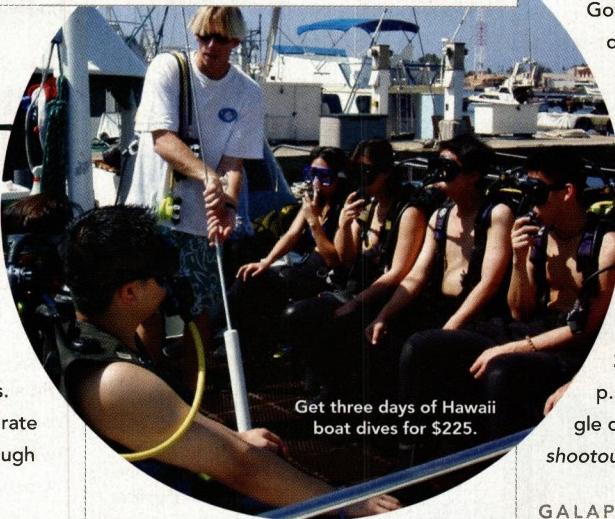
### Colonial Charm

**2 THE DEAL:** Five nights in an ocean-view room at the Colony Club, three days of two-tank boat diving with Hightide Watersports, daily breakfast buffet, airport transfers, complimentary water sports (excluding jet skis), hotel gratuity and all taxes, for \$1,159 p.p., dbl. or single occ., and is valid through Oct. 14, 2004. You must mention "Wet Deals Colony" when you make reservations. (800-326-6898, [www.divehightide.com](http://www.divehightide.com))

## BONAIRE

### Kids Stay Free

**3 THE DEAL:** Through 2004, kids 12 and under stay free at Plaza Resort Bonaire, plus receive a 50 percent discount on meals. Plaza Resort's two-for-one dive package includes seven nights in a standard suite, six days of two-tank boat dives, unlimited shore diving, tanks and weights, taxes and service charges,



daily breakfast buffet, welcome cocktail and round-trip airport transfers. The price is \$824 p.p., dbl. occ. Offer is valid through Sept. 30, 2004. (800-766-6016, [www.plazaresortbonaire.com](http://www.plazaresortbonaire.com))

## LONG ISLAND, BAHAMAS

### D Is for Diving

**4 THE DEAL:** Stella Maris Resort offers five- and seven-night packages designed to introduce nondivers to scuba. The package includes ocean-view accommodations, instruction and three days' diving, all meals, house wine with dinner, three drinks per day, taxes and service charges, flight service from Nassau and airport transfers. Also included are the use of kayaks, bicycles and sailboats, snorkeling excursions, and two boat cruises each week. The five-night package is \$1,235 p.p., dbl. occ., \$1,305 p.p., single occ.; the seven-night package is \$1,567 p.p., dbl. occ., and \$1,660 p.p., single occ. Valid through Dec. 18, 2004. (800-426-0466, [www.stellamarisresort.com](http://www.stellamarisresort.com))

## NEW PROVIDENCE, BAHAMAS

### Shark Shootout

**5 THE DEAL:** Stuart Cove's dive deal for The Great Bahamas Shark Shootout includes seven nights in an ocean-view room at the South Ocean Golf & Beach Resort, one orientation dive day, four days' boat diving, a surprise fun dive day, photography presentations by Stephen Frink, a welcome reception, a mid-week dinner and farewell dinner, T-shirt and goody bag, hotel tax, service charges, and photo instruction by Stephen Frink and the staff at Fin Photo. The dates are Sept. 18-25, 2004, and the rate is \$1,435 p.p., dbl. occ., or \$1,862 p.p., single occ. (800-646-3333, [www.sharkshootout.com](http://www.sharkshootout.com), [www.stuartcove.com](http://www.stuartcove.com))

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**6 THE DEAL:** Aggressor's Dive the World club members or returning Aggressor guests can visit the Galapagos Islands at a discounted rate. Trips are Thursday to Thursday, with seven days' live-aboard accommodations and five-and-a-half days of diving, including Wolf and Darwin islands. The Nov. 18-25, 2004, trip costs \$2,495 p.p., a \$400 discount. Club members may bring a friend for half price during the trip Dec. 23-30, 2004, making the member's price \$2,895, and the friend's price \$1,447.50. (800-348-2628, [www.aggressor.com](http://www.aggressor.com))

## AMBERGRIS CAYE, BELIZE

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**7 THE DEAL:** Enjoy a six-night stay in an oceanfront studio suite at the Mayan Princess in San Pedro, four days of two-tank dives with Amigos del Mar, local air transfers and hotel transfers. You must mention *Scuba Diving* to get the \$499 rate, valid through October 2004.

## DIVE DEALS

(800-850-4101, [www.mayanprincesshotel.com](http://www.mayanprincesshotel.com))

### GRAND CAYMAN

#### Fall Fantasea

**8 THE DEAL:** Sunset House Resort offers a special with four nights' accommodations, three days of two-tank

boat dives, unlimited shore diving and made-to-order breakfast. The price is \$554.20 through Oct. 30, 2004, including government tax and service charges. The meal-inclusive package starts at \$747.80. You must ask for the "Fall Fantasea" rate and have at least one diver in every room. This special coincides with Sunset

House's hurricane watch plan, in effect until Nov. 30, 2004, which gives travelers up to 18 months to complete their stay if a hurricane watch or warning occurs for Grand Cayman during their scheduled dates. (888-854-4767, [www.sunsethouse.com](http://www.sunsethouse.com))

### COZUMEL, MEXICO

#### Octoberfest Fun

**9 THE DEAL:** The Reef Club Cozumel and Sand Dollar Sports offer a special during Octoberfest, Oct. 2-9, 2004. Octoberfest features a RuPaul night, toga and beach party, and home-made bikini contest. Includes seven nights of all-inclusive accommodations, five days of two-tank boat dives, round-trip airport transfers, hotel and service charges, for \$765 p.p., dbl. occ. ([www.sanddolarsports.com](http://www.sanddolarsports.com), [www.reefclubcozumel.com](http://www.reefclubcozumel.com), [www.caradonna.com](http://www.caradonna.com))

### TURNEFFE ISLANDS ATOLL, BELIZE

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inclusive packages include accommodations in a deluxe room, three dives per day, tanks and weights, all meals, transfers to and from the island, dive trips to the Blue Hole, Half Moon Caye and Lighthouse Reef on Tuesdays, and night dives on Thursdays. A three-night package is \$850, a four-night package is \$1,050, and a seven-night package is \$1,475. Valid September 2004 through April 2005. (800-874-0118, [www.turnefelodge.com](http://www.turnefelodge.com))

#### AMBERGRIS CAYE, BELIZE Reader Discount

**11 THE DEAL:** The Blue Tang Inn's Ixchel dive package offers five nights' accommodations, daily two-tank dives and one day trip to Turneffe Elbow with Hustler Tours, daily breakfast and airport transfers. The price is \$745 p.p., dbl. occ., or \$675 p.p., triple occ., through Nov. 15, 2004. Mention Scuba Diving to receive a 10 percent discount. (866-337-8203, [www.bluetanginn.com](http://www.bluetanginn.com))

#### CAYMAN BRAC Brac Fever Fest

**12 THE DEAL:** Divi Tiara Beach Resort invites you to Brac Fever Fest, Aug. 15 through Jan. 8, 2005. Daily activities include all-night happy hours at Turtle Beach Bar, outdoor barbecues, movies on the beach, a Caribbean Thanksgiving dinner, underwater slide shows, underwater photo contests and more. Includes seven nights' air-conditioned accommodations, daily two-tank morning dives, unlimited tanks for shore dives, daily buffet breakfast, dinner and round-trip airport transfers, starting from \$889 p.p., dbl. occ. (800-801-5550, [www.diviresorts.com](http://www.diviresorts.com))

#### SABA, NETHERLANDS ANTILLES Sea & Learn

**13 THE DEAL:** During Saba's Sea & Learn event, naturalists, scientists and academics gather to present

multimedia presentations. All activities are free of charge and open to the public. ([www.seaandlearn.org](http://www.seaandlearn.org))

During the Sea & Learn event, Sea Saba Dive Center offers a six-night package with accommodations at Julianas' Hotel, nine dives, breakfast, airport and dive boat transfers, upgrade to an ocean-

view room, hotel tax and service charges welcome cocktail, and your choice of an advanced open-water course, nitrox course or a four-day camera rental. The price is \$830 p.p., dbl. occ., and is valid through Oct. 31, 2004. (599-416-2246, [www.seasaba.com](http://www.seasaba.com), [www.julianas-hotel.com](http://www.julianas-hotel.com))

SD

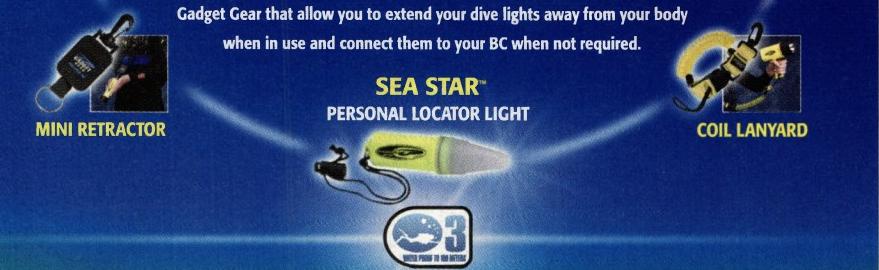
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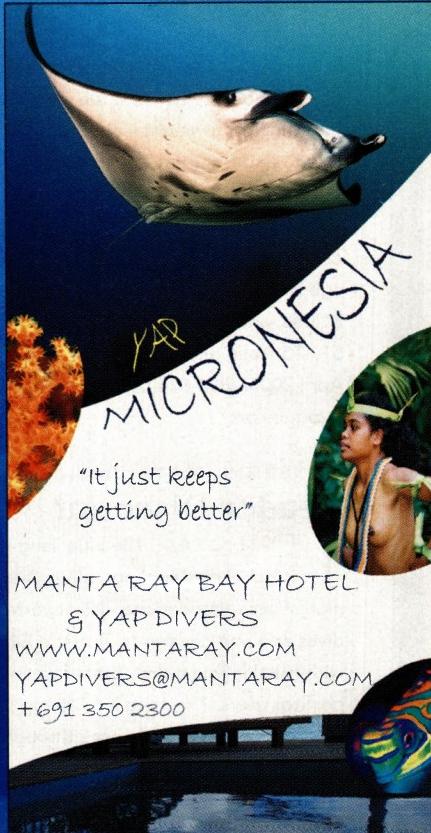


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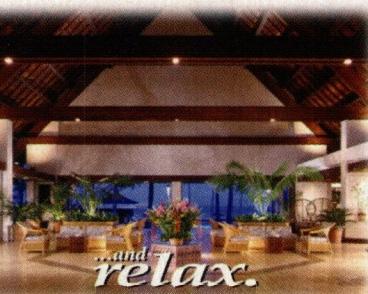


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BY *Denis Devine* ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Steve Barbaria*

# Do ne TH 1 ne N G

## FOR THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

*Saving the  
world,  
one diver  
at a time.*

The oceans have been getting a lot of ink lately, but much of the news has been grim. In the last year, two top-level panels of scientists, politicians and activists have issued separate but similar dire warnings about the state of the world's waterways. The Pew and U.S. Ocean Commissions each identified overfishing, marine pollution, invasive species, coastal development, habitat destruction and climate change as threats to the liquid portion of our planet. The world's waterways, it turns out, are struggling under the weight of a perverse combination of neglect and too much attention of the wrong kind.

The good news is that divers are uniquely qualified to help set things right. We can first make sure we're not making things worse through our diving. But our influence doesn't stop when we take off the mask and fins. In this

article, you'll find dozens of ways that you can have a positive impact on the marine environment, whether you're in the water or not.

We want you to choose at least one of these suggestions and do it. To help you make good on your good intentions, to share ideas with other divers and to challenge your dive buddies to follow your example, we've set up an interactive online "Do One Thing" feature at [www.scubadiving.com/doonething](http://www.scubadiving.com/doonething). Read this article, go online, pledge to do something and follow through. Then, next time you're under water getting that 45 minutes of bottom time, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing you've given something back.

## Don't feed the animals.

Or touch them. Or ride them. All of these interactions can interrupt the animals' feeding and mating habits enough to put them in danger. You can find the Coral Reef Alliance's guidelines to whale, dolphin and turtle watching at [www.coral.org](http://www.coral.org).

## Take only photographs, leave only bubbles.

If each diver refrains from taking a souvenir home from the deep, there just might be something left for the next diver that's worth seeing.

## Shop for sustainable seafood.

Some fish stocks are well-managed; others are being fished to the brink of extinction. Some farmed species offer hope for meeting humanity's rising food demands; others are destroying coastal environments around the world. It's tough to know what's the right thing to buy or eat; luckily, several environmental groups

Ocean Institute ([www.blueoceaninstitute.org](http://www.blueoceaninstitute.org)), Environmental Defense ([www.environmentaldfense.org](http://www.environmentaldfense.org)) and the Monterey Bay Aquarium ([www.mbari.org/cr/seafodwatch.asp](http://www.mbari.org/cr/seafodwatch.asp)). The Seafood Choices Alliance also publishes a synthesis of the three lists at [www.thefishlist.org](http://www.thefishlist.org).

## If you hunt or collect for food or trophy, obey the laws and consider your impact.

Try not to take too much of any one species, and if you are diving with novices, consider that they will likely follow your example the next time they dive—and so will the friends they bring down below, and so on.

## Join a cleanup.

Each September, hundreds of thousands of people around the world gather on beaches and below the surface for the International Coastal Cleanup. But at least as important as the debris that's picked up off the shore—last year, more than 450,000 people col-

## CUT AWAY AT THE PROBLEM, ONE LINE AT A TIME.

cause even more damage to the reef than just leaving it. Instead, carefully cut away any lines or nets—even cloth—you see choking a reef.

Fishing lines are strangling reefs in every ocean, and your knife is the best solution to the tangled mess. Be careful not to pull on the line, which could

have committed much energy and research to these very questions.

Several nonprofit groups offer guides that you can print out, stick in your wallet and consult whenever you're buying seafood or ordering dinner in a restaurant. Three of the more popular wallet guides are distributed by Blue

lectected more than 7.55 million pounds of junk—is the valuable data on ocean currents and marine pollution that researchers glean from the notes of volunteers. For more information on this year's big event, scheduled for September 18, visit [www.coastalcleanup.org](http://www.coastalcleanup.org).

For more information about

## Donate Your Dive to Science

Recreational divers have something extraordinarily valuable to offer marine science: lots of time in the water. In recent years, savvy scientists have been enlisting civilians in their research through reef, fish and sea life monitoring programs.

The Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF), a nonprofit group of divers, keeps track of how many of which fish its members see during dives, then offers its data for researchers and regulatory agencies to crunch. Check the REEF web site, [www.reef.org](http://www.reef.org), for more information on how you can get involved in the Fish Survey Project. REEF also recently added sea turtles to its survey and, in the Pacific Northwest, divers can monitor invertebrates for the Living REEF Project.

Another good way to put your dives to scientific use is to join REEF's Great Annual Fish Count in July. To find dates for events in your region, visit [www.fishcount.org](http://www.fishcount.org).

coral reef health for Reef Check. The information that divers gather helps international and local agencies plan for preserving and restoring coral reefs; for more information, go to [www.reefcheck.org](http://www.reefcheck.org).

Similarly, ReefBase, a comprehensive global information system with a vast amount of online information about coral reefs, has volunteers compile reports that help monitor the phenomenon of coral bleaching. When corals expel the algal cells that live inside their tissue, they bleach and look dead, but are often still alive. A wide range of environmental factors can cause bleaching, but high sea temperatures cause the worst

how to run an underwater cleanup, visit CORAL's web site at [www.coralreef alliance.org/parks/uwcleanupguide.html](http://www.coralreef alliance.org/parks/uwcleanupguide.html).

## Give reefs a checkup.

Volunteers in more than 60 countries record their observations of



episodes—and as such, might be the “canary in the coal mine” for climate change’s effect on marine life. Divers can help scientists understand coral bleaching by filing reports; see [www.reefbase.org/input/bleachingreport](http://www.reefbase.org/input/bleachingreport).

### Support marine protected areas.

These underwater parks offer marine life a needed refuge to recover from decades of intensifying fishing pressure. If the parks charge or request a user’s fee, think of it as a down payment on the heirlooms we owe the next generation of divers.

### Reduce, reuse, recycle.

The fewer disposable containers we use, the fewer we’ll see in the ocean and shorelines. Dispose of toxic wastes—especially batteries—in the safest way available to you; many communities collect such wastes.

### Break the oil addiction.

The less you drive, the more you take public transportation, car pool or bike, the fewer fossil fuel emissions trickle their way into our oceans. A 2002 National Academy of Sciences study found that

the oil flowing from our streets and driveways into the oceans amounts to one *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, or nearly 11 million gallons, every eight months.

### Boat responsibly.

When you’re on a boat, take care not to lose anything overboard. Secure everything, and return all trash to land.

### Be an underwater vacuum cleaner.

Fill your BC pockets or the cuffs of your wetsuit at your ankles or wrists with trash. It won’t slow you

### PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MASK IS

Recent years have seen a proliferation of nonprofit groups working on behalf of marine conservation. One of the best things you can do to help the environment is to join one of these groups and donate to the cause. Here are some of the best:

» **BLUE OCEAN INSTITUTE** ([blueoceaninstitute.org](http://blueoceaninstitute.org)) focuses on deepening connections between humanity and living seas. » **BLUE VOICE** ([www.bluevoice.org](http://www.bluevoice.org)) documents transgressions against marine life on film. » **CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL** ([www.conservation.org](http://www.conservation.org)) applies science, economics, policy and community participation to protect ecosystems. » **CORAL REEF ALLIANCE** ([www.coral.org](http://www.coral.org)) works with global communities around the world, helping to solve coral reef conservation challenges. » **THE COUSTEAU SOCIETY** ([www.cousteau.org](http://www.cousteau.org)) is dedicated to the preservation of nature for future generations. » **EARTH ISLAND INSTITUTE** ([www.earthisland.org](http://www.earthisland.org)) serves as an incubator and support network for more than 30 conservation and restoration projects. » **ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE** ([www.environmentaldefense.org](http://www.environmentaldefense.org)) links science, economics and law in environmental advocacy. » **GREENPEACE** ([www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org)) uses nonviolent confrontation to expose environmental problems and to force solutions.

» **MARINE CONSERVATION BIOLOGY INSTITUTE** ([www.mcbi.org](http://www.mcbi.org)) works to protect and restore marine life. » **MARINE FISH CONSERVATION NETWORK** ([www.conservefish.org](http://www.conservefish.org)) lobbies government officials in support of marine conservation legislation. » **MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM** ([www.mbaraq.org](http://www.mbaraq.org)) coordinates marine conservation and research programs. » **NATIONAL COALITION FOR MARINE CONSERVATION** ([www.savethefish.org](http://www.savethefish.org)) works to conserve the world’s ocean fish.

» **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT TRUST’S CONSERVE OUR OCEAN LEGACY CAMPAIGN** ([www.oceanlegacy.org](http://www.oceanlegacy.org)) is a broad national effort to build support for ocean and fish protection. » **NATIONAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL** ([www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org)) uses law, science and activism to protect the planet’s wildlife and wild places. » **THE NATURE CONSERVANCY** ([www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)) works to protect more than 117 million acres around the world. » **NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM** ([www.neaq.org](http://www.neaq.org)) pro-

*Groups, cont’d. on page 61*



## Take Pictures

With the rapid spread of underwater and now digital cameras, divers have more opportunities to record the underwater environment the way they find it. A nonprofit web site that provides photos to universities, nonprofit groups and government agencies, the Marine Photobank, seeks submissions from amateur photographers for their growing visual archive of the world's true sunken treasures. See [www.marinephotobank.org](http://www.marinephotobank.org) for information about how you can submit your photos.

down much, and your simple action will leave the reef cleaner than it was when you found it.

### Give a pep talk.

The National Environment Trust is sponsoring a campaign called Conserve Our Ocean Legacy (COOL) to enlist people who love the water to sign a pledge to do their part to protect and preserve the oceans and its resources. They also have 40-minute PowerPoint presentations available for any-

one interested in giving a preservation talk to dive clubs or other groups ([www.oceanlegacy.org](http://www.oceanlegacy.org)).

### Don't crowd dive sites.

If the dive site is packed, ask your fellow divers and dive operator if they mind seeking out a less crowded site. Crowds can't help already-stressed reefs.

### Keep your hands off.

Don't touch anything on a dive, not with your feet, not with your hands, not with your regulator. Even slight contact can damage coral; some can sting you back.

### Replant native plants and mangroves.

Sea grasses, mangrove trees and native vegetation protect reefs in many ways: by trapping sand and sediment that otherwise covers and smothers corals; by filtering toxins out; and by sharing the brunt of ferocious storms.

### Educate your fellow divers.

Spread the word about coral reef bleaching and enlist fellow divers to care for and preserve their environment.

### Watch your wastewater.

On land, that means washing your car on your lawn or at a car wash that recycles the used water. Don't let the dirty water and soap run off into the storm drains, which eventually drain into the ocean. Route rooftop downspouts into landscaped areas for the same reason.

On a boat, that means using a pump-out facility for your waste-

water instead of hoping dilution is the solution to your personal pollution.

### Choose nontoxic household products.

Avoid using fertilizers and pesticides on your lawn and garden. We can reverse the nutrients and toxins pouring into rivers and streams with each rain if we recognize that underwater environments suffer when our flood of nutrients starve the water of oxygen.

### Don't use Styrofoam.

Scientists with Deep Ocean Exploration Research report spotting Styrofoam broken into tiny pieces in some of the deepest parts of the ocean. Because it doesn't decompose, it can cause big digestive problems for tiny animals like brine shrimp and other bottom-feeders.

### Work to bring mooring buoys to any dive sites you patronize.

They don't install themselves. For ideas and inspiration, see the Coral Reef Alliance's *Handbook on Mooring Buoy Installation and*

Maintenance ([www.coralreef alliance.org/divein/eventideas/moor ingbuoys.html](http://www.coralreef alliance.org/divein/eventideas/moor ingbuoys.html)).

### Talk to your fellow divers.

The more they know, the less likely they are to damage the reefs.

### Watch that anchor.

Avoid dropping anchors on coral reefs; where possible, seek out a mooring buoy. Mooring buoys enable many boats to tie down at the same location and spare corals from the constant disturbance.

### Do your homework.

Before you leave home, research your destination and its operators and resorts. Some countries have more enlightened zoning and marine-protected areas than others; seek them out. Search for a dive operation, resort or boat that adheres to ecotourism principles.

### Buy a specialty license plate supporting oceans.

A few states offer them: If you live in Florida, a \$25 specialty license plate urges people to "Protect Our Reefs" and also raises money

for research and reef-restoration programs.

### Learn a new species each time you dive.

Take a cue from birders and keep a "life list" of each fish, creature and coral you see on dives. You'll impress your friends and fellow divers with your knowledge, and you might encourage other people to care enough to preserve the biodiversity we love.

### Log on, join in.

By now you should have a good idea of something you can do for the marine environment. Now, we want to help you follow through. The "Do One Thing" campaign continues online. Here, you can:

>> FIND even more ideas about how you can positively impact the marine environment.  
>> MAKE a pledge, detailing what you're going to do. >> CHALLENGE dive buddies and other friends and family to follow your lead. >> INTERACT with other divers and exchange ideas about marine conservation.

To join our effort to get divers involved in marine conservation, go to [www.scubadiving.com/do onething](http://www.scubadiving.com/do onething).

SD

Groups, cont'd. from page 59.

vides leadership for the preservation and sustainable use of aquatic resources. >> OCEANA

([www.oceana.org](http://www.oceana.org)) works to restore and protect the world's oceans through policy advocacy, science, law and public education. >> THE OCEAN CONSERVANCY

([www.oceanconservancy.org](http://www.oceanconservancy.org)) seeks to inform, inspire and empower through science-based advocacy, research and public education. >> THE OCEAN PROJECT

([www.oceanproject.org](http://www.oceanproject.org)) works to promote ocean conservation through zoos, aquariums and museums. >> REEF CHECK

([www.reefcheck.org](http://www.reefcheck.org)) works to restore and maintain coral reef health. >> REEF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION

([www.reef.org](http://www.reef.org)) seeks to educate and enlist divers in the conservation of marine habitats. >> REEF GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL

([www.reefguardian.org](http://www.reefguardian.org)) works to protect coral reefs and their marine life. >> REEF RELIEF

([www.reefrelief.org](http://www.reefrelief.org)) works to preserve and protect living coral reef ecosystems. >> SEACOLOGY

([www.seacology.org](http://www.seacology.org)) works to preserve the environments and cultures of islands. >> SEAWEB

([www.seaweb.org](http://www.seaweb.org)) works to link the media to marine conservation groups. >> WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

([www.wwf.org](http://www.wwf.org)) works to save endangered species and wild places.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

>> INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP: Sept. 18, 2004 • The world's largest one-day volunteer effort on behalf of the world's waterways. Last year, more than 450,000 people collected more than 7.55 million pounds of marine debris and helped scientists learn much about currents and marine pollution. For more information, visit [www.coastalcleanup.org](http://www.coastalcleanup.org). >> DIVE IN TO EARTH DAY: April 2005 • Divers in more than 62 countries and territories helped extend the terrestrial goodwill under water this year. For more information, visit [www.coral.org/divein](http://www.coral.org/divein). >> GREAT ANNUAL FISH COUNT: July 2005 • Snorkel or dive America's dive sites and help scientists better understand reef fish populations. [www.fishcount.org](http://www.fishcount.org). To find dates for events in your region, [www.fishcount.org/events/calendar.html](http://www.fishcount.org/events/calendar.html).

## LEAVE MARINE LIFE WHERE IT BELONGS.

for your fish tank, either. It's often illegal, but it's never smart for someone who likes to see these things under water. The U.N. Environment Programme reports that the aquarium trade snatches more than 20 million tropical fish and as many as 10 million other marine animals each year. When fish are caught using sodium cyanide, coral reefs suffer as well. If you do buy pet fish, look for certification by the Marine Aquarium Council.

Avoid buying souvenirs made of coral, turtles and other marine life, and don't bring anything home

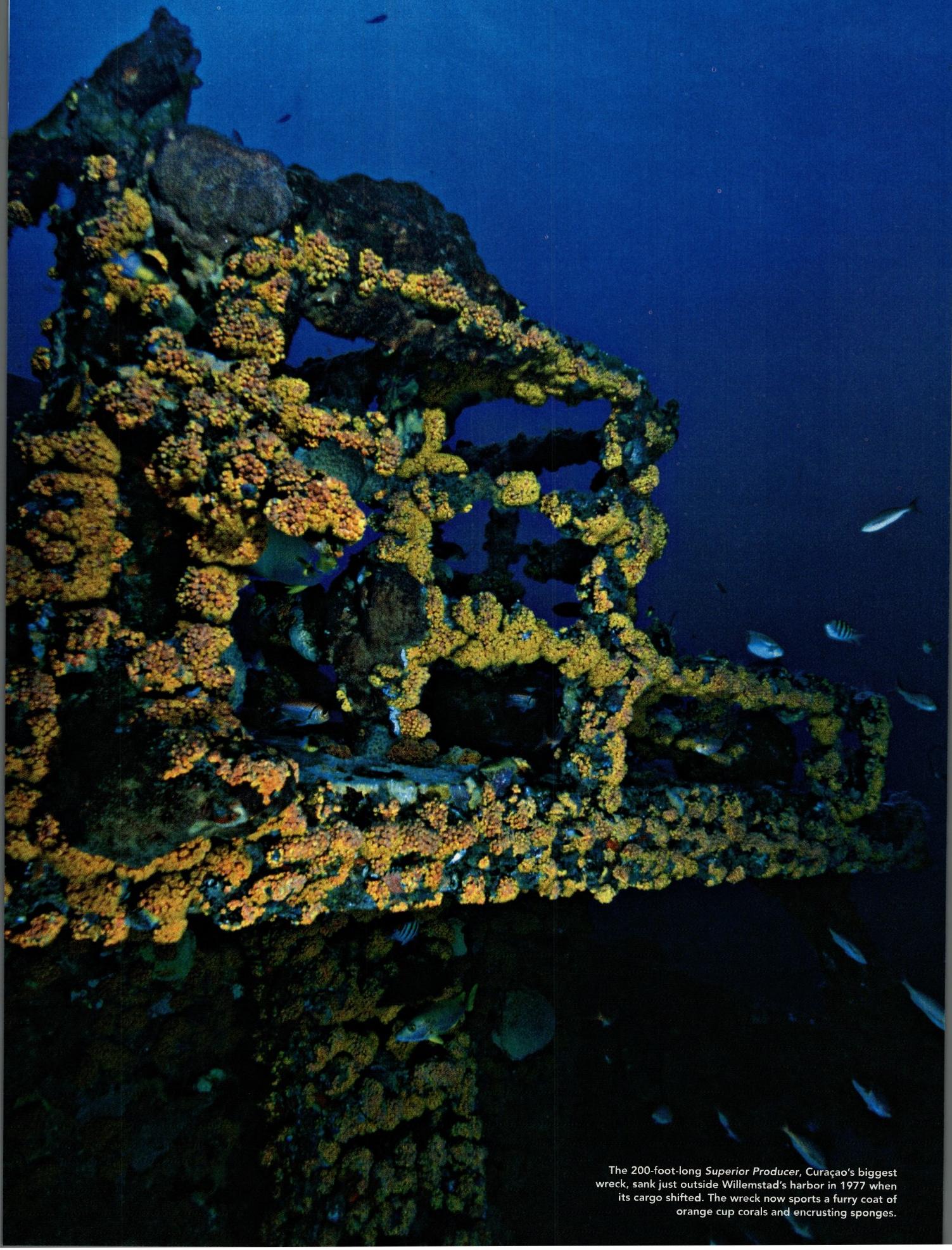
TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY DONALD TIPTON

# Log

Curaçao

**IT'S HARD TO TELL FROM** Curaçao's scrubby, cactus-strewn landscape, but like the other islands in the Netherlands Antilles chain off Venezuela, Curaçao was thrust up from the Caribbean seafloor some 70 million years ago in a burst of molten lava. The island's geological layer cake of volcanic rock, coral, limestone and sand is mirrored by the underwater reefscape: sand shallows, coral terraces, sloping drop-offs and sheer walls. Luckily for divers, many of the best sites are protected by the Curaçao Underwater Park, which stretches for 12.5 miles off the south leeward coast. Many sites are easily reached from shore and are marked by buoys. One excellent shore dive can be found at the mouth of Jan Thiel Bay, where the drop-off is studded with star and wire corals and barrel sponges. Off the island's northwest tip is Playa Kalki, which has a reef flat leading to stacks of plate corals on a wall that gradually drops down to below 100 feet. A one-and-a-half-hour boat ride to the southeast gets you to the rocky islet of Klein Curaçao, where you'll find enormous orange ear sponges and lots of reef fish like chromis, wrasses and snappers, plus turtles.

( A V I S U A L T O U R  
A B O V E A N D B E L O W )



The 200-foot-long *Superior Producer*, Curaçao's biggest wreck, sank just outside Willemstad's harbor in 1977 when its cargo shifted. The wreck now sports a furry coat of orange cup corals and encrusting sponges.

Dutch treat: Willemstad's vibrant architecture evokes Amsterdam.



**AFTER A BRIEF SETTLEMENT BY THE SPANISH IN THE 16TH CENTURY**, the Dutch claimed Curaçao in 1634. The influence of the Netherlands is evident everywhere on the island, especially in the architecture of the capital port city, Willemstad, which resembles a tropical Amsterdam. In the oldest part of town, the charming facades and tiled roofs of the 17th- and 18th-century Dutch colonial buildings are brushed in Caribbean colors: warm reds, yellows and oranges and bright blues, greens and pinks. Because of its unique architecture, Willemstad was named to the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage list, a distinction that protects 765 monuments and sites, such as the Belvédère Mansion and St. Anna Basilica, in the city's historic area. Another unusual feature of the city is the Queen Emma Bridge, built in 1888. The floating pedestrian bridge—it rests on pontoons—spans St. Anna Bay and connects the east and west sides of Willemstad. Many operators offer guided afternoon tours once a week.



**THE TUGBOAT, ONE OF CURAÇAO'S MOST POPULAR SITES,** is located on the protected southeast side of Caracas Bay on the southern end of the island. The little wreck lies in 17 feet of water, making it an easy shore dive for beginners, a great snorkeling spot and, at this sun-drenched depth, an ideal backdrop for photo ops. It is usually mobbed by a vast array of fish, from damsels to groupers. On the seaward side of the wreck, springy wire coral adorns the drop-off that starts in 30 feet of water and slopes down into the abyss at a 45-degree angle. A short swim from the boat are dock pilings encrusted with bright tube sponges and orange cup corals.

The Tugboat is three dives in one—wreck, reef and macro.  
Above: Resorts line the island's leeward coast.



The view from a hilltop fort overlooking Caracas Bay. The Dutch built eight forts on Curaçao to protect it from foreign invasion and pirate attacks.





At Porto Marie, a lush coral garden lies a short swim from shore. Below: A large population of flamingos feeds in Curaçao's many salt pans.



**PORTE MARIE, OR THE VALLEY, IS A DIVE SITE** off the expansive white sand beach also called Porto Marie, located northwest of Willemstad adjacent to Habitat Curaçao Resort. You'll have to pay an entrance fee, but the diving is well worth it. The site has a set of reefs that run parallel to shore and are separated by a canyon-like valley. Use the mooring buoy as a reference point and make a five-minute swim to the first reef, which starts at around 50 feet. Head seaward over a sand flat and you'll arrive at the valley; farther out is the second reef at about 60 feet. Healthy stands of coral and a riot of marine life, including angelfish, parrotfish, groupers, brown chromis, yellowtail snapper, triggerfish, trumpetfish, cornetfish, turtles, lobsters and stingrays, make this a standout dive.



**GET THERE** > For more information about Curaçao, turn to **In Depth**, page 99, section 4.



# High-End

# DRY



Top-of-the-line dry  
suits to warm up  
those cold dives.

**I**magine giant-striding into 50-degree water without shrieking into your mouthpiece from the cold water shock. Imagine diving all day and never getting chilled. Imagine spending your surface intervalbebopping about in a pair of fuzzy "jammies" while your buddies huddle wet and shivering in their soggy wetsuits.

This might be a fantasy for most divers, but it's just another day on the water for a dry suit diver.

Dry suits are simply the best way to stay warm while immersed in water. And we don't mean just cold water. Dry suit manufacturers now offer thermal systems for temperate and tropical environments, too, and it seems divers everywhere are embracing the benefits of getting wet while staying dry.

For this review, we asked manufacturers to send us their best high-end suits to find out what's state of the art in diving dry. We've divided them into two categories: fabric/shell suits and neoprene suits, though as you'll see in the individual reviews, most high-end suits are made from an array of materials.

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by JOHN BRUMM  
photography by JOSEPH BYRD

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**FABRIC SUITS****DUI TLS350**

Ask an experienced dry suit diver what he considers the last word in trilaminated dry suit design, and chances are the model he mentions is the TLS350. It seems like this suit's been around forever, and it's still one of our all-time favorites.

The first thing that strikes you about the TLS350 is how light it is. This nylon/butyl rubber/nylon trilaminated weighs in at easily half the weight of other shell suits. Climb into this easy-to-don suit and it's like you're not wearing a suit at all.

To protect the exterior, there's a double layer of nylon in all the high-wear areas. A neoprene warm-neck collar lets you tuck the skirt of your hood in over the latex neck seal and protects against the ice-pick pain of bare skin hitting cold water. The suit has a telescoping torso, suspenders, a crotch strap and an internal elastic waist cord that's adjustable, all to maximize range of motion while minimizing loose material. The outer layer dries extremely fast or you can wipe it down after a dive and be packed just minutes after exiting the water.

The TLS350 comes with crushed neoprene soft socks, enabling you to turn the suit inside out for drying and wear DUI's heavy-duty Rock-Boots (included with the suit). Originally designed for hiking over rocks to reach remote dive sites, these boots feature durable canvas-style uppers and a rugged sole. They're comfortable and offer great traction. > **BASE PRICE:** The TLS350 is available in three versions: Stock suits start at \$1,798. Special Production suits, which are built from one of more than 150 patterns (you select an overlay design and choose from more than 25 options), run \$2,198. Then there's the Signature Series suit, for \$2,418, where you start with a tailored Special Production suit and then add all the accessories you want, from Kevlar knee pads to pockets to the brand-new ZipSeal or ZipGlove systems, DUI's latest innovations.

**Whites Catalyst SE QuadFlex**

Another of our favorites, the Catalyst QuadFlex offers one of the nicest fits among all the shell



suits in this group. The credit goes to Whites' "captive suspension system," which places flex panels on the waist, above the knees, beneath the arms and up the shoulders—all areas where you need maximum flexibility and a full range of motion. This increased mobility makes for a more comfortable suit, plus you can go for a snugger fit and cut down on hydro-drag.

This suit also excels in the areas of durability and convenience. Vulcanized rubber knee pads and shin guards let you be as aggressive under water as Whites' bold bear logo suggests, without worrying about damaging the suit. Another example of thinking tough: carbon fiber reinforced reinforcement pads beneath both valves.

For convenience, there's a zippered neck collar with a rolled neoprene edge that simplifies getting into and out of the suit, plus it gives you a place to tuck your hood. Elastic wrist cuffs help seal off gloves from seepage, and the ankles have adjustment straps to keep air from shifting to the boots.

You can get the Catalyst with attached 7mm dry boots, but we prefer the shell sock used with Whites' EVO3 lace-up boots. These heavy-duty boots have padded ankle supports, reinforced toes and heels, and a tread designed to



**WHITES**  
Catalyst SE  
QuadFlex



MOBBY'S  
Armor Shell Pro

handle everything from boat ladders to rocky beaches. Our test suit included what Whites calls the Pocket Matrix, a reinforced vinyl base plate mounted on the thigh where you can attach expandable utility pockets. > **BASE PRICE:** \$2,098. The Catalyst comes with a Traveler backpack. This carry bag includes a waterproof flap inside the main compartment to separate the suit from the rest of your gear.

### Mobby's Armor Shell Pro

If you like to play rough-and-tumble under water, the Armor Shell Pro is the suit for you. With the Cordura outer shell, it's almost like wearing coveralls, and with additional layers of padded Cordura in the knees and seat, you can roll around among the rock reefs to your heart's content without worrying about damaging this suit. However, all this protection comes at a price: the Armor Shell Pro is one of the heavier fabric suits in this group.

Mobby's uses a horizontal zipper positioned right above the waist. You climb into the body of the suit, slip into the arms, then pull over the neck. After closing the zipper, you fold down a protective flap and then secure it all with a couple of nylon straps that encircle

your waist and clip in front. This system enables you to maintain a streamlined fit by neatly tucking away any loose material.

Zippered ankle cuffs protect the boot seams. Ankle straps help manage air shifts. Wrist cuffs give you a place to tuck in your gloves, and the neck has a zippered collar for tucking in your hood. The suit has reflective stripes on the shoulders so you can be seen on the surface at night. > **BASE PRICE:** \$1,899, including a carry bag.

### Pinnacle Aquatics Evolution Dry

Wearing the Evolution Dry might make you want to go under water with a bunch of tools and build something. The outer layer has a clear utilitarian look to it; the base Cordura material is rugged enough, and there's additional textured polyester in all high-abrasion areas.

The bulletproof benefits of the Evolution Dry aren't limited to the choice of materials. Both valves have substantial rubber backing pads. The internal adjustable waistband is not simply a piece of shock cord but an actual nylon strap. The 5mm boots are made of vulcanized rubber with toe and heel caps and a solid rubber sole. And for all the stuff you're taking on that building project, there's an expandable hip pocket with Velcro flap on one thigh, and a utility pocket complete with tool loops and a big stainless steel D-ring on the other.

Like the Armor Shell Pro, this suit is a bit heavier than the other fabric suits in this group. But it's our favorite rear-entry shell suit, and a lot of dry suit for the money. > **BASE PRICE:** \$1,379, which includes a hood, a carry bag and a neoprene accessory bag. A repair kit will be included starting in October.

### Hunter Diving Pro VSN 1100 Tek

Here's a no-nonsense shell suit from Hunter Rubber Company, formerly a part of Gates Corporation. Specially compounded rubber is sandwiched between two layers of Armatek jersey nylon. Hunter calls this laminate VSN, and claims it's a hard-wearing, noncompressible, neutrally buoyant material. It definitely makes for a very rugged suit. It comes with large rubber knee pads designed to withstand lots of abuse, and the two big pockets, each with small plas-

tic D-rings for clipping gear, will stow just about anything. It's one of the most rugged—and heaviest—suits in this group, but ironically, it's fitted with some of the lightest-duty boots. They're basically 5mm neoprene socks covered with latex and fitted with nonskid soles.

All Hunter dry suits are constructed with "vulcanized seam technology," which is backed by a lifetime seam warranty. The VSN Tek includes reflective strips on arms and thighs, a very nice warm neck collar, a semi-dry hood, a nylon carry bag that doubles as a changing mat, and an excellent owner's manual that provides not only great information on Hunter suits but also on dry suit diving in general. An adjustable-torso, self-don version of the suit is currently under development. **> BASE PRICE:** \$2,166.



### Diving Concepts Z Flex

This new shell suit sandwiches a Cordura outer layer and a polyester-weave inner layer to 12 waterproof coats of butyl rubber. The suit's telescoping torso, nonadjustable elastic waistband and crotch strap work together to provide a snug fit. Knee pads are a 600-denier polyester/neoprene blend, and the attached boots are made of compressed neoprene coated with vulcanized rubber.

Diving Concepts' options include two dry glove choices. The basic model has a ring installed on the dry suit and makes latex seal or dry glove attachment very simple. The Snap-On system is a bit more complicated, but turns your dry gloves into an integral part of your dry suit. **> BASE PRICE:** \$1,200. Includes a hood and carry bag that can double as a changing mat, plus a DVD video, *Dry Suit Diving in Depth*.



### Oceanic M2O Biodyr

The M2O Biodyr is made from BioFlex, a patented material that Oceanic claims can stretch in all directions while staying dry and airtight. The suit is indeed very pliable,

and it has an attractive, almost suede-like surface, making it the most stylish of these shell suits. For additional protection, Oceanic sews anti-abrasion Cordura panels onto the leg fronts and seat area. Little touches like Cordura wrist and ankle cuffs both protect seal seams and cut down on water flow to your gloves. The super flexible boots have soft rubber uppers and a deep-tread sole. **> BASE PRICE:** \$1,750.



### OS Systems HD Pro

The bilaminated HD Pro uses a horizontal zipper that makes it easy to climb into the suit. By folding down the zipper flap and wrapping the straps around your waist, you protect the zipper while achieving a streamlined fit. The outer nylon material is slick and dries quickly. A layer of Cordura has been added to the thigh, lower leg and seat areas to increase durability. A Velcro-flap pocket is sewn onto the right thigh. The boots are flexible but don't provide much support. The suit rolls up and clips onto itself in a neat bundle for transport. **> BASE PRICE:** \$1,520.



### USIA Aqua Pro Plus

USIA doesn't take any chances when defining "high-wear areas" because on the Aqua Pro Plus you'll find tough, 1,000-denier Cordura just about everywhere. However, beneath the arms and in the crotch there are BioFlex gussets, so the heavier Cordura doesn't affect the range of motion. The suit has a telescoping torso and a crotch strap to help fine-tune fit. Wrist and ankle cuffs protect the suit's latex components. A very nice adjustable neoprene neck collar lets you tuck in your hood. The rubber boots are reinforced in the toe and heel and have a serious tread. **> BASE PRICE:** Starting at \$1,100. Includes an expandable thigh pocket and a dual compartment bag.

DUI  
CF200X



### Viking Pro Tech F/E Surveyor

This new vulcanized rubber suit was developed for divers who "place extremely high demands on flexibility and strength," says the company. Additional layers of rubber cover all high-wear areas, and soft polyester lines the interior. The suit, one of the heaviest in this group, comes with an attached hood (there are five hood styles to choose from). The rubber boots have reinforced toe and heel caps and a decent tread, but seem a bit lightweight for what comes across as a pretty rugged suit. **> BASE PRICE:** \$2,350. Includes a hood liner, bag and a nice repair kit. The owner's manual provides very good information on suit repair.



## NEOPRENE SUITS

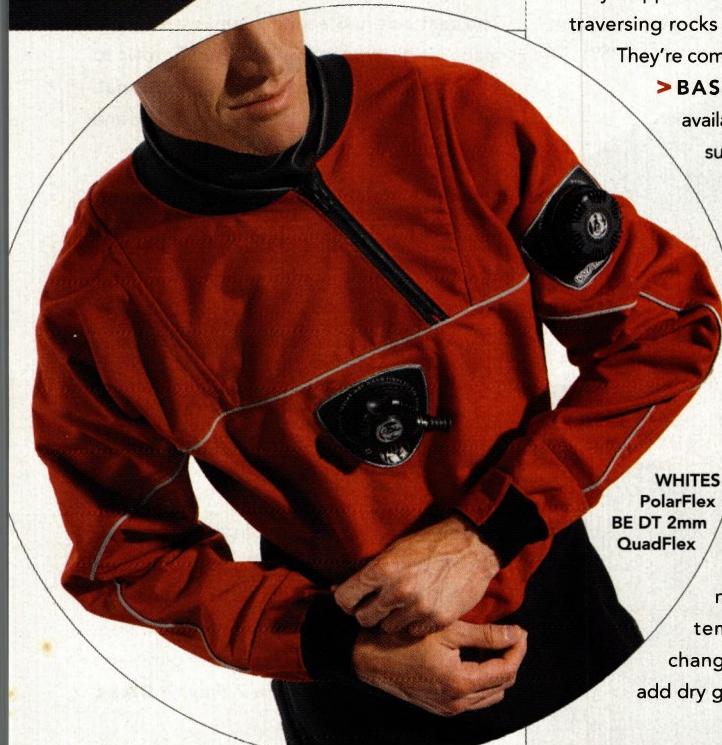
### DUI CF200X

The CF200X has long been considered the gold standard of neoprene dry suits. Made out of DUI's patented CF crushed neoprene, the CF200X gives you a durable yet thin and supple shell, making it one of the lightest neoprene suits in this group. The suit's ability to stretch makes it possible to wear it snug while still maintaining full range of motion. Of course, the telescoping torso helps, and there's a crotch strap to assist with fine-tuning the fit. The diagonal dry zipper is protected from abuse by a Cordura cover. There's also a Cordura overlay on the shoulders and chest area to withstand abrasion with a waterproof zipper guard. Knee pads are crushed neoprene that reach halfway up your thighs and halfway down your shins to make sure you're covered when kneeling on rocky seafloors. The neck seal has a neoprene collar for tucking in your hood.

The CF200X has crushed neoprene soft socks so you can turn the entire suit inside out—a huge convenience when it comes to drying or cleaning the suit. The socks also fit nicely into DUI's RockBoots, which are included with all DUI suits. These all-purpose boots have canvas-style uppers and a rugged rubber sole for traversing rocks or climbing dive ladders.

They're comfortable yet tough as nails.

**> BASE PRICE:** The CF200X is available in three versions. Stock suits cost \$2,298. Special Production suits, where your suit is built from one of more than 150 patterns and you get to choose from more than 25 options, run \$2,698. For \$2,918, you can get the Signature Series version, which starts with a Special Production suit and adds all the accessories you want, including DUI's new ZipSeal or ZipGlove systems, which enable you to change wrist and neck seals or add dry gloves in minutes.



### Whites PolarFlex BE DT 2mm QuadFlex

Interested in buying a new dry suit but can't make up your mind whether to go fabric or neoprene? Well, this hybrid suit goes both ways. On top you have QuadFlex. Below the QuadFlex you have Denstek compressed neoprene layered with a protective TuffTek nylon jersey. This combination creates a relatively lightweight suit with the insulating capabilities of neoprene and the comfort and durability of fabric. Or, as Whites suggests, the best of both worlds.

Beyond its unique construction, this suit's myriad extras would impress even the pickiest dry suit shopper. Carbon fiber molded valve pads provide good suit reinforcement. The suit has a very nice zippered neck cuff with a skin-in neoprene edge. This cuff lets you sandwich your hood between suit and seal, minimizing water circulation. The wrists also have cuffs that protect the seals and help keep water out of your gloves. Large vulcanized rubber knee and shin pads, adorned with the growling Whites bear, provide excellent leg protection. Integrated into the lower portion of the shin pads are adjustable ankle straps to help control air shifts to the boots.

The test model came with an expandable thigh pocket and shell socks designed to be used with Whites' EVO3 lace-up boots. These are relatively lightweight yet extremely rugged all-duty boots with padded ankle supports, reinforced toes and heels, and a tread design that will comfortably conquer the rockiest beaches. **> BASE PRICE:** \$1,958.30. Includes a nifty Traveler backpack carry bag.

### Waterproof Gear Antarctic 2000 Zor

Waterproof Gear is a Swedish company just entering the U.S. market. Its Antarctic 2000 Zor is a heavyweight suit—literally—and it's loaded down with extras. Rubberized reinforcing pads back up both inflate and exhaust valves. The vulcanized rubber boots have neoprene ankles for flexibility and Kevlar patches on top to withstand fin pocket abrasion. Heavy-duty vulcanized rubber knee pads extend down to act as shin guards too. And there's a layer of polyurethane that extends from the middle of the back down to about mid-thigh. In short, when you go deep, you



**WATERPROOF GEAR**  
Antarctic  
2000 Zor

go protected.

Beyond the rugged construction, there are little touches that just make diving the suit more pleasant. Zippered neoprene wrist cuffs minimize water flow to your gloves, and an excellent neck collar has front and rear flaps that adjust so you can tuck in your hood. The suit also has a large expandable Power Pocket on each hip. These pockets have zippered top closures and lower zippers that, when opened, allow the pockets to expand to accommodate larger loads. In all respects, this is one impressive suit. > **BASE PRICE:** \$1,390. Includes a backpack bag and a hood.

### Bare Wetsuits XCD2 Tech Dry

Bare's flagship XCD2 Tech Dry sports lots of stretch for excellent range of motion, due both to the thin hyper-compressed neoprene and Bare's Automatic Torso Recoil (ATR) system. This system uses a hidden high-stretch neoprene fold in the waist area that enables the torso to move independently of the lower portion. This

makes the suit easy to climb into, and lets you wear a more streamlined suit while maintaining the ability to bend over, squat or reach skyward without restriction.

The XCD2 Tech Dry is a well-designed suit, with a zippered overlap that helps protect the main dry zipper. The boots are 7mm neoprene covered with vulcanized rubber atop a rugged tread. The knee pads are Kevlar, there's a utility pocket with Velcro flap on the left thigh, and reflective patches on shoulders and arms to light you up at night. Bare offers an optional dry glove system, suspenders and soft socks with lace-up Trek boots. > **BASE PRICE:** \$1,499.95. Includes a backpack-style carry bag.



### Apollo Sports EX Microcell 4.0 Ultra

This new suit made from 4mm Microcell provides the warmth of a 6.5mm foam neoprene wetsuit, according to Apollo. It comes with neoprene wrist cuffs and a neck collar for tucking in your hood. The suit has nice suspenders and substantial rubber knee and shin pads. The boots have unique exhaust valves on them to vent air when you're in a heads-

down position.

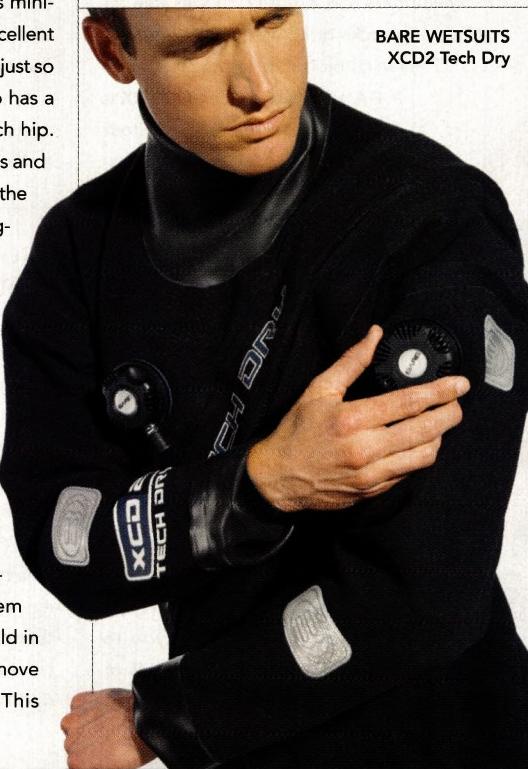
The suit's primary exhaust valve has two operating positions: manual and automatic. It's also designed to be disassembled for servicing in the field. The problem is, the way you rotate the valve to take it apart is not unlike the way you switch the valve from manual to automatic mode. At depth, when wearing thick gloves, it's possible to inadvertently squeeze the locking tabs. If you happen to do this while you're rotating the knob from manual to auto, the valve could come apart in your hand. > **BASE PRICE:** \$1,250. Includes a neck bio-seal, a wrist bio-seal set and a special dry suit hanger.



### BayleySuit Aquastatic

Since 1955, BayleySuit has been in the custom suit business. Its unique lightweight construction includes tri-laminate arms and legs and quad-laminate torso panels composed of layers of nylon, neoprene, membrane and silver down. According to BayleySuit, this material does not compress under pressure.

The Aquastatic has light-duty knee pads and just a bit of seat area protection. Boots are basically neoprene extensions of the legs with neoprene rubber soles. The test suit had a vulcanized waterproof zipper in the groin area to simplify trips to the bathroom. Suspenders are optional. > **BASE PRICE:** \$1,800. Includes a hood and carry bag.



**BARE WETSUITS**  
XCD2 Tech Dry



### Diving Concepts Neo Z

New from Diving Concepts, the Neo Z is a very thin and flexible suit, and a bit lighter in weight than the majority of neoprene suits covered here. It has a telescoping torso and uses a crotch strap to control fit. The exterior has the same abrasion-resistant nylon jersey found on the company's more expensive suits. Its boots are made of vulcanized rubber over compressed neoprene. Options include detachable glove and wrist seal systems like the Z Flex. > **BASE**

**PRICE:** \$1,200. Every Neo Z sold includes a hood and carry bag, a very thorough owner's manual, plus an instructional DVD video, *Dry Suit Diving in Depth*.



### Oceaner Riptide 3mm Titanium

The Canadian-made Riptide 3mm Ti is a straightforward dry suit with contoured shoulders and arms to allow for a more comfortable fit.

This is the only suit we looked at with the exhaust valve positioned on the upper wrist, a fairly common position for exhaust valves years ago. Of course, valve placement is your choice—Oceaner will put it anywhere you want. A neck collar, protective zipper flap, vulcanized rubber knee pads, hood and a carry bag are standard. Options include bellows thigh pockets, suspenders, knife pockets, an attached hood and a strategically placed dry zipper so you can relieve yourself without having to undress. >**BASE PRICE:** \$1,250.



### Tusa HRS

Tusa's new HRS (Heat Retaining System) dry suit is constructed of hyper-compressed neoprene sandwiched between two layers of titanium-coated rubber. An outer "J-skin" made from threads coated with water-resistant

chemicals provides the same water-repelling properties as rubber, according to Tusa. The HRS's exhaust valve is a variation of the one used on the Apollo suit, with the same ability to come apart when you might not want it to. A diver wearing thick gloves could grasp the valve and depress the locking tabs without being aware of it. Consequently, when switching from manual mode to auto mode, he could end up with the disassembled valve in his hand. >**BASE PRICE:** \$1,499. SD

**GET MORE** > For more information about the dry suits in this issue, turn to *In Depth*, page 100, section 5.

# WHAT MATTERS IN A DRY SUIT?

**JOB ONE FOR ANY DRY SUIT IS**, obviously, to keep water out. This allows insulating undergarments to keep the diver warm. How suits go about doing this can vary, depending on these features.

>**MATERIALS.** The fabric dry suits are either bilaminates—exterior nylon weaves with the inner side either coated with, or laminated to, some sort of waterproofing urethane; or trilaminates—waterproof butyl rubber sandwiched between layers of nylon. Fabric suits are lightweight and have no inherent buoyancy. They dry quickly and fold compactly for transport. They don't stretch much though, and need to fit a bit more loosely than neoprene suits, unless there are features like telescoping torsos and expandable gussets.

Vulcanized rubber suits have more stretch than fabric suits and they're easy to repair, but they also tend to be on the heavy side and a bit pricey.

Compressed neoprene suits are made from what is basically a thinner—and more dense—wetsuit rubber. Crushed neoprene is thinner and denser yet, and extremely durable because of a unique crushing process. Compressed and crushed neoprene suits are high-stretch, so you can get a closer fit without sacrificing range of motion and they're extremely durable.

>**ZIPPERS.** High-end dry suits are available in both rear-entry versions, where the zipper is located on the shoulders, and front-entry versions, referred to as self-donning, with the zipper located on the front of the suit, either diagonally across the chest or horizontally just above the waist.

Shoulder zipper suits are often, but not always, less expensive, and some divers feel they allow for better overall range of motion. They're relatively easy to get into

and out of, but you need a buddy to zip them up for you. Front-entry suits actually take a bit more finesse to get into and out of, but you can zip them yourself.

>**SEALS.** While both latex and neoprene seals do a good job of keeping water out, latex is clearly the seal material of choice in high-end suits. All latex seals need to be replaced every year or two, depending on how much you use the suit and how well it's treated when in storage.

Neoprene seals have a longer life than latex, but it's harder to maintain a consistently solid seal with them. To help with this, neoprene seals may have a smooth "skin" layer on one side.

>**VALVES.** Inflate valves, positioned on the chest, are push-button activated. The exhaust valve, usually located on the upper left arm, lets you bleed air from the suit, either manually by pushing a button, or automatically by dialing the valve between full-open and full-closed positions.

>**BOOTS.** Dry suit footwear ranges from flimsy latex to rugged vulcanized rubber with aggressive treads, either attached to or separate from the suit. Some boots, while adequate for boat decks, are simply not up to the rigors of diving rocky shorelines. Regardless of what boot you choose, plan on purchasing a pair of fins one size larger than you use with your wetsuit booties.

>**UNDERGARMENTS.** It's your undergarment that will determine whether or not you stay warm, so don't scrimp on your insulation. And match the undergarments to the suit. A high-stretch dry suit and a no-stretch undergarment will cancel each other out, for example.

>**ADD-ONS.** Buying a new high-end dry suit is not unlike buying a new car. You have your base model, which comes with an inflation hose and boots. Most also throw in zipper lube, and some include suspenders, hoods and carry bags. Beyond that, you have options and upgrades. Choose from boot styles to dry gloves to replaceable seal systems. There are also choices in pockets and knee pads. It's worth the effort to build the perfect dry suit system.

( DIVE ACCIDENTS, CLOSE CALLS  
& HOW YOU CAN AVOID THEM )

# LESSONS FOR

# Life

by Michael Ange

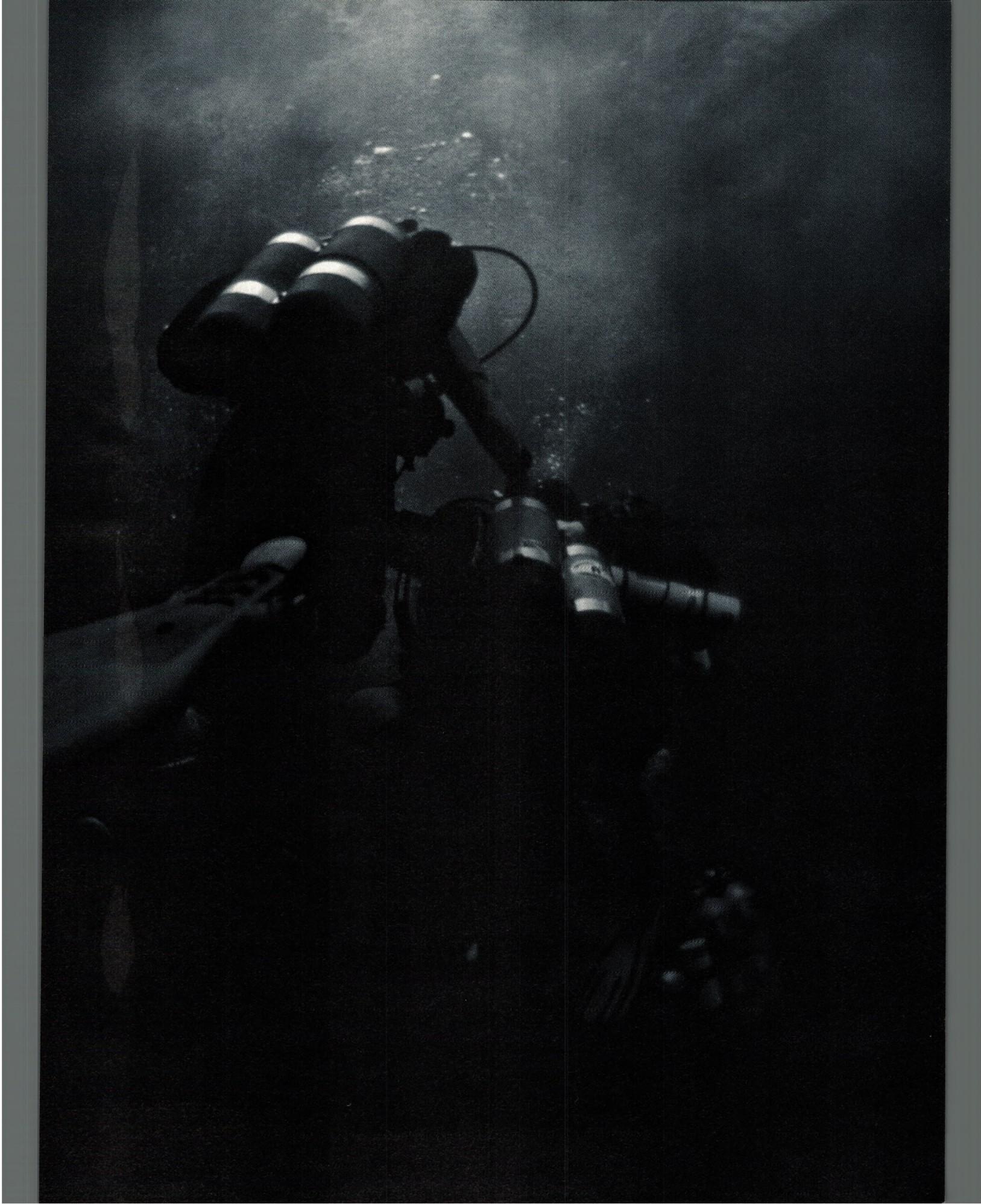
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(THIS IS A TRUE STORY,  
BUT THE NAMES HAVE  
BEEN CHANGED.)

## BAD BREATH

*Inhaling a mouthful of water reinforces an important lesson about maintaining tanks.*

**ASCENDING TO THEIR FIRST DECO STOP** after a dive to 140 feet, Tom's five technical diving students began deploying their surface markers. The skill was a difficult one for the class, so he watched carefully, making sure the students maintained a proper ascent rate. One student became so distracted that he began to sink to the bottom of the deep freshwater dive site. Signaling for one of his safety divers to look after the knot of ascending divers, Tom immediately swam head-down, kicking rapidly toward the student. Breathing hard on his reg, he suddenly gagged on a mouthful of foul-tasting water. Tom immediately depressed the purge button, but the reg continued to deliver a steady stream of high-pressure water.



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## LESSONS FOR LIFE

### THE DIVER

Tom was an extremely experienced technical diving instructor with more than 20 years of teaching experience and a very active dive schedule. He had superior water skills and an extensive understanding of diving physics, physiology and gear. In his late forties, Tom was in good health and was extremely comfortable in the water.

### THE DIVES

On the last dive of the previous day, Tom's students showed they needed remedial training in some key skills. To help increase their proficiency, Tom took the group back to a shallow-water platform at the end of a relatively short deep dive. He waited above the platform while allowing the students time to practice the necessary skills.

Tom had started the dive with a partial fill, and now the pressure gauge attached to his twin back-mounted cylinders had dropped well into the red zone. He had exceeded the gas limits of the dive, but was reluctant to end the skills session. His students still had plenty of air and needed more practice. When he depleted the main cylinders, Tom switched to the nitrox decompression cylinder under his left arm and ended the dive, surfacing without incident.

Tom and the students left their cylinders at the dive site where they refilled them the following morning for the dive to 140 feet. As Tom entered the water, he noticed a funny taste to his air, but figured he must be imagining it because it didn't taste like oil or anything he usually associated with bad air. Following surface safety checks and an in-water safety drill, the students followed the dive plan, descending

to 140 feet for a 20-minute profile. The dive went as planned until one student began sinking rapidly.

### THE INCIDENT

Chasing after the wayward student, Tom passed through 130 feet when he inhaled a big gulp of foul water instead of air. He immediately gagged, coughed out the water, and pressed the purge button, assuming the failure was in the regulator and that the purge would allow him to receive air. His confusion and concern deepened when the purge only delivered a steady stream of high-pressure water.

Tom's experience and training kicked in. He flared to stop his descent and switched to his alternate regulator. As he achieved a horizontal attitude in the water, he pressed the purge button on his alternate regulator and received a much needed breath of air. He quickly searched the water and was relieved to find that the student was now ascending safely.

### ANALYSIS

At the first decompression stop at 20 feet, Tom began to assess the problem. Although it delivered air, even his alternate seemed to be breathing wet. Switching to his deco gas, he began examining his regulators. Because he heard no bubbles escaping from behind him and there was still air in the cylinders, he assumed a second stage failure, but he realized that this did not explain the problem with the other regulator. The probability of two well-maintained regs failing on the same dive was extremely low. Gently taking a breath, Tom was surprised to find that his first regulator now delivered air as well, although the air still tasted foul and wet. He glanced once

again at his pressure gauge, noticing for the first time that it was somewhat fogged. It slowly dawned on him that his tanks must have water in them.

Tom once again turned to a head-down position, pushing the purge button on one of his regulators, and watched as a stream of rusty water shot out from the mouthpiece.

Completing his decompression, Tom remembered his last dive of the preceding day. He soon realized with embarrassment that by depleting his main cylinders, he had allowed water to siphon into them. Every time he assumed a head-down position, gravity pulled the water to the top of the cylinders and through his regulator.

Only Tom's extensive experience and skills, which he practiced on a regular basis, prevented a disaster. He walked away from the dive with only a nasty respiratory infection (cleared up by antibiotics), tanks in need of tumbling, regulators in need of rebuilding and another teaching story to tell his students. **SD**

#### LESSONS FOR LIFE

**1 MONITOR YOUR GAS** supply and always surface with at least 200 to 300 psi remaining in your tanks to avoid the intrusion of water. Any tank that is completely exhausted requires a visual inspection.

**2 IF AT ANY POINT DURING** a dive you experience an unusual flavor, wet or oily feel to the air that you are breathing, terminate the dive.

**3 REAL EXPERIENCE MATTERS.** Tom made it a habit to regularly practice emergency skills rarely called for. This extra practice reduced a potential tragedy to a merely embarrassing inconvenience.

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# training



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## YOUR BODY

## Diving in Vain

Do cosmetic surgery and scuba mix? Or will that new face-lift put a wrinkle in your next dive? **BY SELENE YEAGER**

**D**EBRA SHEARER is a Botox enthusiast. "I've been getting shots in my forehead for three years. They work wonders on smoothing out wrinkles." A misadventure in Cozumel earlier this year, however, left her with a forehead that looked more caveman than *Cosmopolitan* and with more questions than answers about the safety of scuba diving following cosmetic procedures.

"We were on a deep wall dive 130 feet down—the deepest I'd ever been," recalls Shearer. "It was beautiful ... until we came up on the boat. Everyone looked at me and said, 'Oh, my God. Your mask must have been too tight!' There were no mirrors on the boat, so I didn't see how terrible I looked until I got back to the hotel and saw Frankenstein staring back. I had an inch-deep edema on my forehead and my eyebrows were popping out. I hadn't felt any pain or pressure. I had no idea how it could have been that bad."

A quick trip to the local dive medicine clinic offered no answers. An equally bewildered doctor advised her to apply compresses and massage the area. She did, and 18 hours later the edema was gone. But her concerns remained. "I still wonder if it's unsafe for me to dive that deep again," says Shearer, who has also undergone other procedures such as collagen injections.

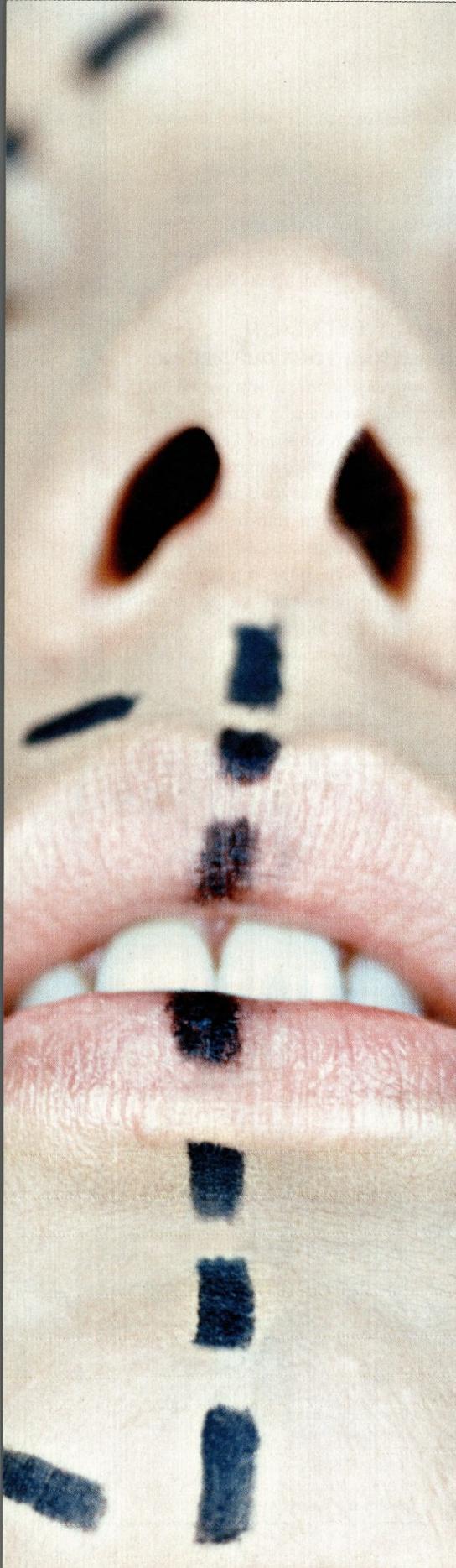
Here's what leading dive doctors say about taking the plunge following popular cosmetic procedures.

**Botox**

**I**F YOU NEVER SMILED, laughed or raised a quizzical eyebrow, your face would remain as smooth as a silk sheet well into your middle age. But with every expression, you create creases that over time become permanently etched into your face. Botox works by blocking the transmission of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine from your nerves to your muscles. With this messenger disabled, your brow can't furrow, no matter how perplexed you are. With your muscles relaxed, the wrinkled areas smooth out and soften.

Diving after Botox is generally considered safe. Though your muscles are immobilized, you should still be able to feel pressure and equalize your mask appropriately. But, as the story above illustrates, there are potential risks. "Botox primarily affects motor neurons, the ones your muscles use to move, not sensory neurons, the ones that give you sensation, like pressure," says dermatologist Sarah Boyce, M.D., of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. "But since acetylcholine is involved with both types of neurons, it is possible to have a small amount of sensory loss," she says.

Also, repeated Botox treatments can make the muscles atonic, says John Anastasatos, M.D., also of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, so they have little shape and resilience, which can contribute to the kind of trouble



Shearer had. "You should still be able to feel pressure where the mask sits on the lower part of your face, and equalize it to lessen the force," Anastasatos says.

Divers who use Botox should make sure their masks are fitted properly and adjusted correctly before they dive and equalize early and often, whether or not they feel pressure during a dive.

### Nips, Lifts & Tucks

**WHETHER YOU GET** a face-lift or a tummy tuck, going under the knife creates scars, which can theoretically impede blood flow and may lead to trouble off-gassing, increasing your risk for decompression sickness. But the real risk here is very low, says Anastasatos. "Most of the gas exchange happens internally in the lungs and at the level of the capillaries," he says. "Limited scars,

like those from elected procedures, should not be detrimental."

What's most important is that you allow ample time for healing, says Mauro Romita, M.D., owner of Ajune, the Center of Beauty Synergy in Manhattan. "Conservatively speaking, you should wait a minimum of six to eight weeks before diving after cosmetic surgery, especially facial surgery," she says. "Otherwise, the pressure of the mask on the face can create unwanted lines and dents during the vulnerable healing period." Diving too soon after surgery also places undue pressure on blood vessels that have been sealed following surgery, and puts you at risk for bleeding and bruising.

Be much more conservative following any major reconstructive surgery, especially rhinoplasty (a nose job), which can cause excessive swelling and breathing

difficulties for extensive periods of time, cautions reconstructive specialist Marc Kerner, M.D., of Northridge Hospital Medical Center in California. For major procedures, your doctor should tell you when it's safe for you to resume diving.

### Breast Augmentation

**INCREASING YOUR CUP SIZE** with breast augmentation can help you fill out your wetsuit—eventually. But you're best off sticking to bikinis and beaches for several weeks following surgery.

You'll be too sore for scuba for the first few weeks with your new breasts. Even after the pain subsides, however, you should wait until you are fully healed—a minimum of six to eight weeks—before taking a plunge.

Some women worry their implants

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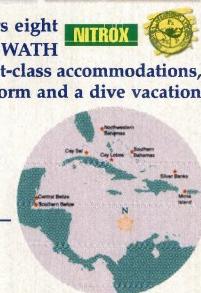
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will pop under the pressure—an unfounded concern. Liquid is noncompressible, so artificial breasts aren't affected any differently during a dive than real ones. "And though they might have a tiny amount of air in them, that air is in a sealed container, so it won't pose a problem when you ascend," Kerner says.

The one caveat: Diving may reduce the durability of silicone implants. "A group of doctors in Italy performed a laboratory simulation of recreational diving using different types of implants," says Anastasatos. "None of the implants showed any ruptures or changes in volume. But the new cohesive silicone-filled gel implants, which are not yet available in the U.S., did show some morphological changes. And it is possible that diving may affect their durability."

In other studies, silicone implants

were more susceptible to increased bubble formation. Unlike saline implants, silicone implants are also heavier than water and may alter your buoyancy. Though either type is ultimately safe for scuba, saline may be the better choice for a frequent recreational diver.

### Skin Resurfacing

**IF YOU CAN'T BEAT** wrinkles, rub 'em out. That's the theory behind dermabrasion, laser resurfacing and chemical peels—all of which use different techniques to remove the top layer of wrinkly skin and uncover the fresh, smooth, fleshy layer below.

"Skin resurfacing and diving do not mix," warns Boyce. "The new skin created by these resurfacing procedures has weak barriers against harsh elements like wind and salt water. Sun is to be avoided

at all costs after these procedures for four to six weeks, while the new skin replaces the old. Excessive sun exposure can cause poor healing and uneven pigmentation," she says.

If you're set on resurfacing, do it during a time of year when you won't be diving, so your skin has plenty of time to heal. Then always use a sunscreen of at least SPF 30 when spending time outside. Be vigilant about reapplying your sunscreen after every dive.

### Hair Transplants

**WILL HAIR TRANSPLANTS** stand up to snagged mask straps and grippy neoprene hoods? "Once those grafts take, they're in there firmly," says Kerner. "If you wait six to eight weeks for the follicles to fully set and the skin to heal, you should be safe to dive." SD

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## DIVING WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

**Q:** My niece, who loves the ocean, wants to pursue scuba diving, but she suffers from cerebral palsy. Can she dive?

**A:** Cerebral palsy is a group of chronic disorders that impair control of movement. Such disorders appear in the first few years of life and generally do not worsen over time. The disorders, which are caused by faulty development of or damage to motor areas in the brain, disrupt the brain's ability to control movement and posture.

Symptoms of cerebral palsy include difficulty with fine-motor tasks (such as writing or using scissors), difficulty maintaining balance or walking, and involuntary movements. The symptoms differ from person to person and may change over time. Some

people with cerebral palsy are also affected by other medical disorders, including seizures or mental impairment, but cerebral palsy does not always cause profound handicap.

### FITNESS FOR DIVING

Diving fitness depends entirely on the extent of disability in the individual. Candidates with mild problems may qualify; candidates with more severe disabilities may be eligible for a restricted certification. The absence of seizures and the ability to master water skills are particularly important. For participation in scuba, a case-by-case determination is needed.

For a full discussion of most central nervous system conditions and diving, read "CNS Considerations in Scuba Diving," an article by the late Dr. Hugh Greer III. It appears in *The DAN Guide to Dive Medicine's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)*, available in the Dive Medicine section of the DAN web site ([www.DiversAlertNetwork.org](http://www.DiversAlertNetwork.org)).

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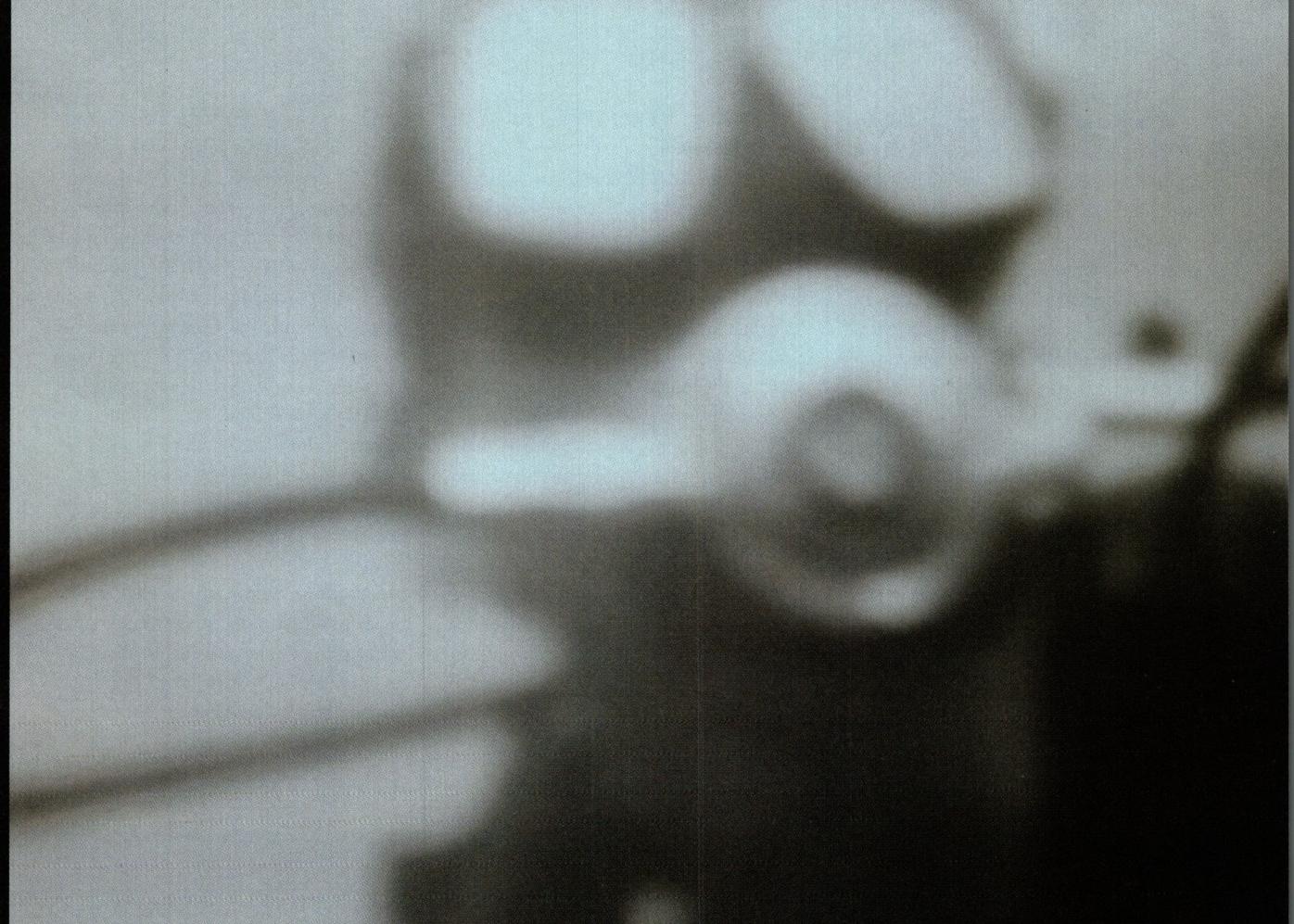
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# Who's Responsible?

When good dives go bad, there's only one person you can turn to, and it isn't the dive guide or your buddy. **BY JOHN FRANCIS**

## JASON GOLDBERG'S

Advanced open-water course ended with a surprise pop quiz. On his third checkout dive in Aruba, having demonstrated successfully the required skills, Jason followed his instructor to a nearby wreck. The instructor motioned to Jason that they

should enter it. "I followed him in and tried to stay close, but he was swimming through the wreck quickly," says Jason.

As his tank began to run low, Jason became positively buoyant. He tried to signal his instructor, but had no knife to bang on his tank, no light to flash—his instructor had told him to leave all "non-necessities" on the boat.

"I floated upward, unable to kick down. My instructor disappeared into another section of the wreck as I floated up into what felt like a dark abyss. Sud-

denly I felt something above me and heard my tank clang against the metal. I twisted and turned and began to breathe heavily. I couldn't see anything. I felt a sharp stinging on my arm as I was cut by coral growing on the metal. I took a deep breath and realized I was low on air."

## Who's To Blame?

**WE'LL LEAVE JASON** for a moment to ponder his next move and ask ourselves who's to blame for this fine mess. Was it the instructor, who "de-equipped" Jason and urged him into an unfamiliar overhead environment? Or was it Jason himself? After all, he was already a certified diver and knew the risks.

Fortunately, Jason kept his head, saw a ray of light streaming in from the next compartment, and was able to pull himself down and out of the wreck. He's still an enthusiastic diver and, in retrospect, has accepted all responsibility for what happened. "I learned an important lesson," he says. "Instructor or not, never leave without safety equipment and never enter a situation that you aren't prepared for."

That's not to say you should ignore what your instructor or divemaster says, or exonerate them when they screw up. Jason's instructor made several serious errors and added insult to the mix when he later blamed Jason for not staying close to him. The point is that you have to stay alert and be responsible for what you do, not turn off your brain and leave the decisions to someone else just because you're on vacation.

## **Disney World Narcosis**

**IN RESORT-BASED** recreational diving and other group dive situations, there's a tendency to follow the leader instead of thinking for yourself. And it's not surprising. It's only the diver-specific form of a wider vacation disease that's endemic where the weather is warm and your every need is anticipated. It's marked by slack-jawed stupidity.

Call it Disney World narcosis. You wander around, following the signs and following the crowds. You do what you're told. You stand in lines where others tell you to stand, board the ride when they say to board. You keep your hands and arms inside the car at all times. You're not scared; in fact, you enjoy the thrill because, well, it can't be really dangerous. Can it?

Obviously, it can. Take Polly's story. At the time, Polly Shaw was imbued with the idea that you followed the divemaster "no matter what." The boat was anchored over a reef off Veradero, Cuba, and the divemaster told the group he knew where the big fish were. "As soon as we descend, the four guys and the divemaster are like, *zoom!* Racing down the reef. The woman I was with, we looked at each other like, 'I guess we have to follow them,' even though we had agreed we would be in slo-mo."

Polly and her buddy strained to follow the racehorses as best they could, breathing hard and getting tired. They eventually found the others searching for big fish, which they never found. After wasting more time and air, the divemaster led the group on the long swim back. "By the time we got back underneath the

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boat, we're all pretty much out of air, way below 500 psi. I was down to 100 psi or less and exhausted." Polly's gauge read zero by the time she dumped her gear on the boat. "Five hours later in the shower I started noticing I was seeing black spots. I was getting a little dizzy." Next stop for Polly: the recompression chamber.

What happened? Polly's Kentucky Derby was her second dive of the day. Her morning dive had been to the wreck of a Soviet missile launcher at 115 feet, so she was still carrying a sizable load of nitrogen when she took off to follow the divemaster racing down the reef. It's possible that hard finning excited unusual bubble formation and brought on the DCS hit. Maybe she ascended too fast because she was low on air. In any case, the hit was unnecessary.

Do we blame the divemaster? Certainly he should not have set a pace two divers in his group could not comfortably match. But Polly, who today is a gung-ho and self-reliant diver, blames herself. "As soon as the group started swimming faster than my buddy and I felt comfortable with, we should have just stopped each other and said, 'No, we're going to stay around the boat.' But we thought the divemaster was controlling us, telling us where we had to go."

Polly now says, "You have to take ownership of yourself and make your own decisions."

## Follow the Leader(s)

**DON'T THINK WE'RE** beating up on divemasters. Divers who are in a follow-the-leader mode don't need a designated

leader at all. Another diver, the group consensus, a prearranged plan—almost anything will do. We humans don't like to think we are herd animals, but we seem to have a powerful urge to stay in a group.

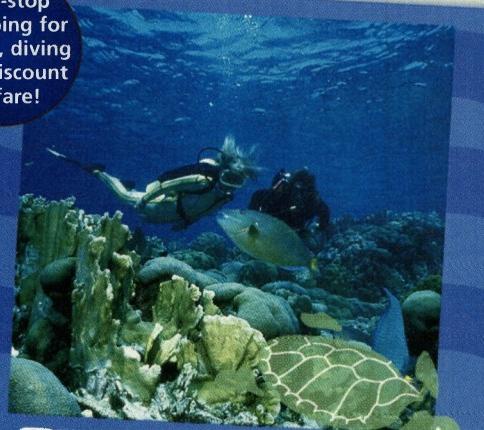
Cathy Hamilton has been there. She was with a group of divers at Ambergris Caye, Belize, filing through a coral swim-through at 104 feet. "When I came out, I looked up and saw the divemaster and a woman headed for the surface," says Cathy. "It turned out later she was having a problem with her mask."

The rest of the group, rather than following the divemaster to the surface, stayed at 104 feet near the exit of the swim-through and waited. And waited.

"If I hadn't been there and knew we had to get up, they would have sat there in the sand at 104 feet and waited for him to come back," says Cathy. Realizing

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their no-deco time was disappearing fast, she coaxed the group into starting up. After a few minutes, the divemaster did come back down, met the group at about 80 feet and they continued the dive.

But these divers weren't through following. The divemaster announced the second dive would also be deep. That sounded wrong to Cathy, who consulted her dive computer and stayed at least 20 feet above the group. The others followed the divemaster. He, however, had been on a different profile on the first dive, so his computer stayed "green" while several in the group locked up for deco-stop violations. No one was bent, but their diving was over for the next 24 hours while their computers reset.

Both times, the dive plan had become obsolete and dangerous because conditions had changed. Both times, divers followed it anyway or followed each other rather than consulting their computers and thinking for themselves. They stayed with the group instead.

Cathy says divers have to blame themselves. "Just because the divemaster is leading the dive doesn't mean he knows what's on your computer," she says. "You are in charge of you."

## When the Thinking Starts

SOMETIMES IT TAKES physical separation from the group before a diver starts thinking and acting independently. For example, a dozen divers hang on the drift line streaming behind a boat. Below them, 107 feet down, is the wreck of the *Superior Producer*, off Curaçao.

When everybody is ready, the divemaster gives the signal and all descend in a group so they won't be separated by the current. But a group of three falls behind; one of them has trouble equalizing her ears. "By the time she got to 20 feet we had lost sight of everyone," says diver Anna Clark.

Now they're in open water, in cur-

rent, trying to find a wreck none of them has seen before, with no guide, no landmarks. Still, they try to follow the group, though it has now disappeared. They descend in the direction the others had taken until, at 110 feet, they find sand. No wreck, no divers and no clue where they were, just blue all around. Isolated from the main group, they stop following and start thinking. Prudently, they ascend to 80 feet, then to 60, 30 and 15, pausing to look around for their friends at each stop. "We surfaced about a mile away from the boat," Anna says. "At least, it looked that far. We could only see it when the waves passed and lifted us up."

They knew this could be serious. It was still early in the dive for the rest of the group, long before anyone would miss them, and the current was taking

probably should have used the mooring line to descend," she says. She and her friends were also responsible for the happy ending because they stopped following and started thinking and acting for themselves.

## Mea Culpa

**ADMITTING RESPONSIBILITY** for our mistakes is easier said than done. I'm 3,000 miles from home on the first dive of my tropical getaway and practically drowning. "Jeez," I'm thinking, "I don't remember this reg breathing so wet. It's giving me as much water as air. Is the mouthpiece torn? Is my mouth half open? It can't be the reg because I got it serviced just before I left home."

Yes it can, Mr. Training Editor. Afterward, Harry, the resort's repair guy,

---

Both times, the dive plan had become obsolete and dangerous because conditions had changed. Both times, divers followed it anyway or followed each other rather than consulting their computers and thinking for themselves. They stayed with the group instead.

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them farther from the moored dive boat every minute. But they were not followers now and took action. They inflated their BCs, blew their whistles and waved a signaling sausage. They tried swimming toward the boat, but stopped when they realized they wouldn't be able to make any progress against the stiff current. They linked arms so they wouldn't be separated, kept their spirits up by joking and waited.

Their adventure had a happy ending. After drifting for 45 minutes, the three were missed, found and rescued unhurt.

Who's to blame for this near-miss? The divemaster for not counting heads more often? For not suggesting they all descend on the mooring line?

Anna thinks she and her friends used poor decision-making. "In hindsight, we

showed me how the diaphragm had been scrunched away from its seat, spoiling the seal. It probably happened when my shop's technician screwed the cover on, Harry said.

I don't blame my shop. I blame me. I knew better than to trust a piece of gear right out of repair. I'd written it more than once in these pages: "Never assume that recently serviced gear functions properly. Try it in a pool first." I had bogus excuses why I hadn't tried out my reg before the first dive, but in reality I had made my dive shop tech my leader and followed him blindly.

Harry was amused by what he assumed was an inexperienced diver's oversight. I thanked him, refrained from giving him my business card and hoped he didn't know who I was. SD

# Capturing the Blue in Black and White

Take a different view of the color-saturated underwater world by shooting black-and-white photos.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
STEPHEN FRINK

**M**OST professional photographers remember their epiphany, the "eureka" moment when they first knew that photography would be the passion that would define their career. Mine came in graduate school when I was taking my first course in black-and-white photography. Seeing the image on that very first sheet of 8-by-10 paper gradually emerge in the Dektol bath beneath the darkroom's safelight inspired me. Soon, Ansel Adams' *The Negative* became my bedtime reader and my mind's eye saw the world in blacks, whites and shades of gray.

But then I went under water. The electric hues of tropical fish cried out for color film, and my vision was far more influenced by Ektachrome (and later, Velvia) than by my trusty Plus-X. Lately, however, I've begun to revisit black-and-white photography, and found that the images can capture aspects of the underwater world that color photography can't. With black and white, you can create a mood, an ambience and a stark power.

Even if you don't have your own darkroom or familiarity with the craft, it's possible to capture high-quality black-and-white underwater images. There are



This Bermuda shipwreck was shot with Agfa Scala black-and-white transparency film.

two easy ways to do it: either shoot black-and-white film or convert color digital images to black and white.

## Shooting Black-and-White Film

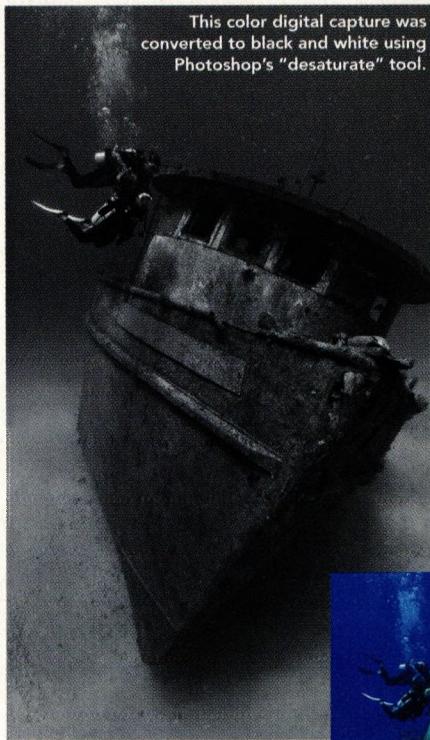
**STANDARD** black-and-white negative films are best for darkroom enthusiasts who process negatives and then print via a conventional enlarger in a home or commercial darkroom. Kodak, however, makes a black-and-white film that can be processed in any lab that does C-41, the chemistry used for normal color photos.

Known logically as "Kodak Black and White" film, this emulsion contains dye couplers balanced to produce a neutral gray or black when printed on conventional color negative papers. The film is processed normally, like any other color negative film, and then printed on conventional papers. Any one-hour lab should be able to process these black-and-white images, and because the film is a 400 ISO negative film with considerable exposure latitude, it is very forgiving in terms of capture variables.

Because few labs have much experience working with this film, it can be hard

to get a good neutral black. Until you shoot enough of it to get your local lab up to speed, this might be challenging. These negatives can be printed on traditional black-and-white papers for those who want control of the final print, but don't want the hassle of processing the negatives.

Agfa makes a black-and-white transparency film known as Scala. While it can be processed in only three labs in the U.S. (see [www.agfa.com/photo/products/profession](http://www.agfa.com/photo/products/profession)



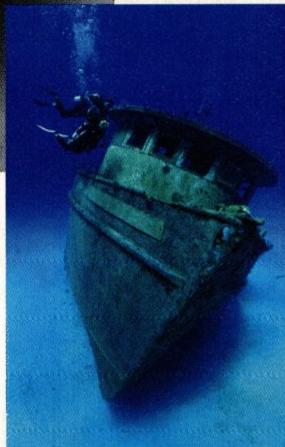
al/film/scala/labs), it does have the advantage of being a slide film, delivered in normal cardboard 35mm slide mounts. It can be projected like any other slide film, and it can be scanned for printing like any other slide film. Because the slide is the final product, you don't have the level of darkroom control you find with conventional black-and-white films. This can be a blessing or a curse depending on your personal passion for darkroom tasks. I find Scala is a

little low in contrast for many underwater subjects, but that can be enhanced by selective application of strobe light, or contrast control in processing. Underexposing and overdeveloping will enhance the contrast of this film, and so exposing this 200 ISO film as if it were 400 ISO, and then asking the lab to push it one stop, may give a better result for most underwater scenes.

## Converting Color Digital Images

**WHEN I FIRST BEGAN** capturing digital images under water, I was very excited about the black-and-white setting on my Nikon D1X. In fact, one of my early digital shoots was at Grand Cayman's Stingray City and I proudly sent a CD of those images to one of my friends at Nikon. He was very supportive, but told me the black-and-white setting on the camera was intended more for recording lines of text, and that I would be much better off shooting in RAW, capturing all the information possible in the scene and then converting later in Photoshop. Not only would I get a bigger and better file, I would have the time to refine the file, and, more significantly, have the option of using

the image in either black and white or color. Obviously, any image to be converted to black and white in Photoshop can originate directly from a digital camera, but can also be from a scanned color slide, color negative or even a black-and-white negative. However, not all methods of Photoshop conversion are the same.



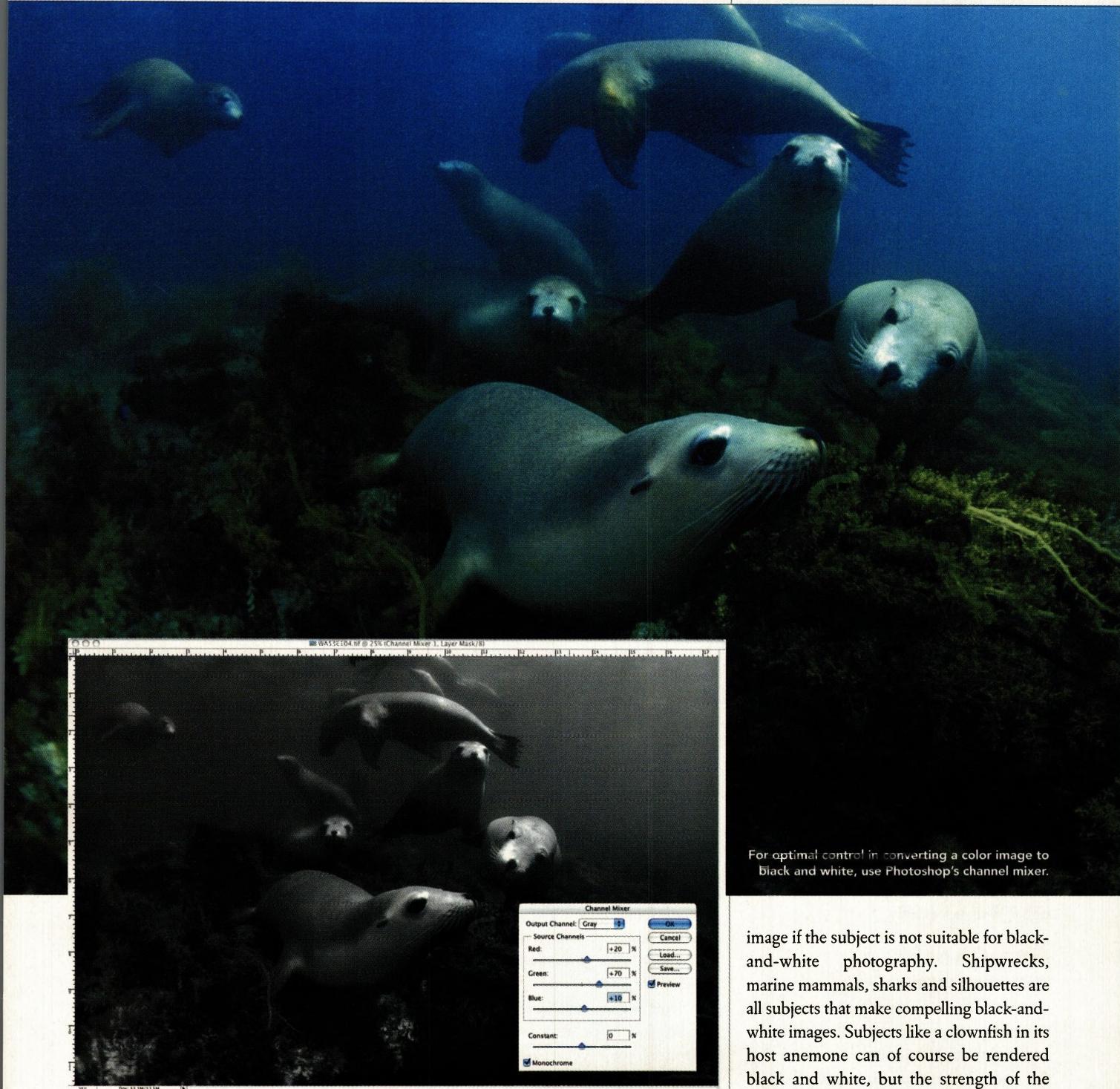
**QUICK AND EASY NO. 1:** Probably the easiest way to get a black-and-white file in Photoshop is to open the image and then go to: Image > Mode > Grayscale. The software will ask if you want to "discard

color info." Click OK, and a black-and-white image will result that can then be enhanced with levels controls and the brightness/contrast sliders (both accessible via the Image > Adjustments controls). You'll notice that the file size is significantly smaller because a great deal of information is thrown out, but it is easy and fast, especially if it is intended for web use where big files are not necessary.

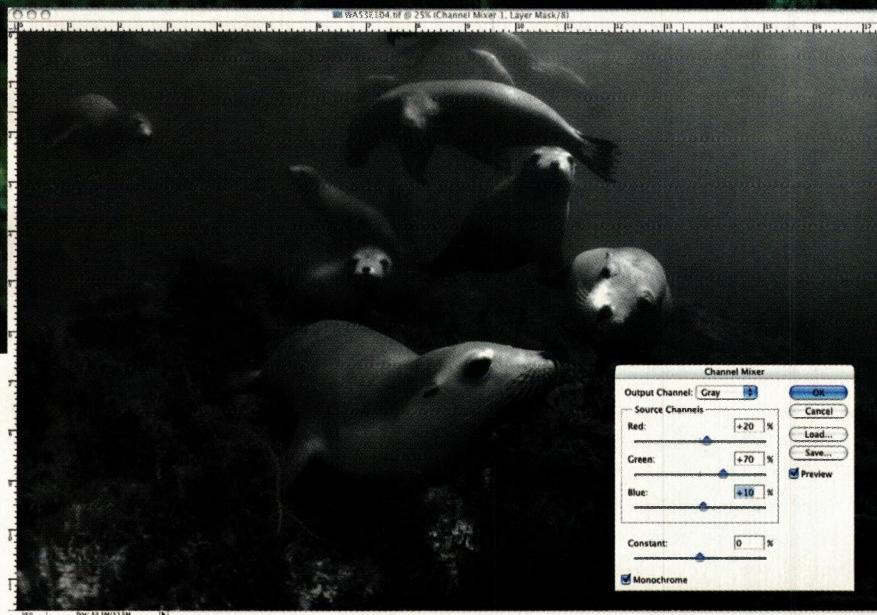
**QUICK AND EASY NO. 2:** To preserve a larger file, it may be preferable to open the file and then go to Image > Adjustments > Desaturate. This will automatically discard the color information and allow tweaks in levels, curves, or via brightness/contrast sliders. Note that many Photoshop gurus will emphatically state that "brightness" and "contrast" should not be used because of their heavy-handed treatment of an image, but I find them useful for refining black and white.

**FOR OPTIMAL CONTROL (ADOBE PHOTOSHOP 6.0 OR HIGHER REQUIRED):** Open the file and then go to Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Channel Mixer. At this point, click on the green channel at the top of the dialog box. The green channel is used because it is generally the one with the most information. Then click the monochrome box at the lower left. Use the adjustment sliders to emulate the approximate values Photoshop would select if you had chosen "grayscale" or "desaturate" as above; Red=20%, Green=70%, Blue=10%. Most likely, these will not be the perfect settings, so tweak with the sliders, just as if you had added filters in-camera. With a properly calibrated monitor (extremely important), you can achieve an impressive black-and-white digital file in this manner. Now, click on "Add New Layer" (the half black/half white circle icon at the bottom of the layers palette); select hue/saturation layer; and finally use the hue and saturation sliders to get the best look. You can also use the lightness slider to adjust the strength of the filter applied.

Be careful when you save your file that you do not overwrite the original color file.



For optimal control in converting a color image to black and white, use Photoshop's channel mixer.



With all these black-and-white conversion steps, assign a unique file protocol. I find it convenient to use the original file name and then insert “\_BW” just before the “.FileExtension.” That way, the file resides on the hard drive right next to the original color

image, but I know at a glance that it’s the black-and-white conversion.

**Subject Selection**  
**OF COURSE, EVEN ADVANCED** technical skills cannot produce an impressive

image if the subject is not suitable for black-and-white photography. Shipwrecks, marine mammals, sharks and silhouettes are all subjects that make compelling black-and-white images. Subjects like a clownfish in its host anemone can of course be rendered black and white, but the strength of the image may be so tied to the color intensity of the fish and anemone that black and white is counterproductive. Previsualization is the key. Learn what can be done with the black-and-white technique of your choice, and then find the subjects that are best expressed with that unique vision. **SD**

# Turning Pro

Do you have what it takes to dive for a living? Hint: Being a great diver is only the start. **BY MICHAEL ANGE**

**I**T'S USUALLY the first thought that goes through a newly minted diver's head: "Hey, I could do this for a living!" After all, the instructor who introduced you to the sport gets paid to dive, so why shouldn't you?

Whether your motivation is to pay for your habit or to experience the thrill of sharing a sport you love with others, nearly every serious diver has at least considered becoming an instructor. It is a great job—right? Wine, women, tropical breezes, island music and the opportunity to dive all you want. Besides, any diver could do it, right? Well, not exactly.

## Gut Check

**THE FIRST STEP** in turning pro is understanding what pro means. Many aspiring divemasters and instructors think that professional status is a simple matter of earning the right certifications. In reality, being a pro in this business has more to do with attitude and interpersonal abilities, which no certification can confer.

If you're serious about turning pro, it's time for a hard-hitting self-evaluation. You must assess whether you have the discipline, the ethics, the interpersonal skills and

the maturity to deal with people and make decisions that have a direct and immediate impact upon their safety and well-being.

It's relatively easy to teach a class or lead a dive when everything goes well. But the instructor gets paid the big bucks for warding off catastrophes and salvaging vacations when things go wrong. Unfortunately, too many would-be instructors fail to realize this responsibility until the first time they have to make a hard call between the safety and the wishes of their students or guests. Do you have the discipline to cancel a dive when necessary and the interpersonal skills to keep a boatload of disappointed divers happy at the same time? A fair number of accidents are caused when diving professionals lack the fortitude to make safety the first concern.

## The Short List

**LET'S EXAMINE** the job skills required of the successful instructor. The short list includes mechanic, businessman, rescue diver, medic, seaman, janitor, salesman, counselor, tour guide and, oh yeah, you teach diving, too.

Some of these jobs, like rescue diver and medic, should be obvious to you. As an instructor, you have an obligation to foresee hazardous conditions and keep your students out of harm's way. And when accidents happen or the situation turns bad, you have the responsibility to respond effectively. That response may include putting yourself at risk to effect a rescue, in addition to administering first aid and coordinating evacuation.

Some of the other jobs like mechanic or technician may be less obvious, but who do divers turn to when a free-flowing reg threatens to cancel their dive? The effective dive professional will be prepared to step in and make at least minor repairs and save the day. That means having the tools and the knowledge to fix whatever problems may arise.

Janitor? Students take for granted clean facilities, whether it's the classroom or the restroom. It may seem like a small matter, but it impacts the student's experience and their confidence in you as a teacher.

## On the Boat

**STUDENTS AREN'T** the only ones with high expectations. Boat crews anticipate that you, as a dive professional, will be able to assist with routine boat operations. As an instructor you should have at least a working knowledge of boat handling procedures before you find yourself in an embarrassing situation.

You may also find yourself in the middle of a confrontation between your divers and the boat crew—and guess who must play mediator and peacemaker? The effec-

The bottom line is that divers pay for a fun experience and it's the dive pro's job to eradicate problems, defuse situations and maintain safety while showing everyone a good time.

tive instructor can discreetly step in, mediate conflicts and restore harmony among the group.

The bottom line is that divers pay for a fun experience and it's the dive pro's job to eradicate problems, defuse situations and maintain safety while showing everyone a good time. All of this must be accomplished while you maintain proper decorum, a positive attitude and all of the other attributes of a good role model.

## Prerequisites

**IF YOU HAVE** the right attitude, tact and personality for all these roles, the actual certification process is the easy part. To apply for instructor training, you'll need at least 100 logged dives with exposure to different environments, plus advanced diver, rescue diver, CPR, first aid, oxygen administration and divemaster certifications.

This process can be intimidating, but if you take full advantage of all of the preceding training opportunities and carefully obtain real-world experience, the challenge will be within your grasp. The important thing is to truly understand and internalize the skills and knowledge. Rushing from class to class in a hurry to check certifications off the list is not the way to go.

The course structure used by several agencies divides the instructor certification process into two phases: the instructor development class (IDC) and the instructor examination (IE).

Depending on the agency, the IDC will take between five and seven days. The curriculum focuses on teaching the instructor

candidate how to teach and how to evaluate proficient skill completion in a new diver.

Conspicuously absent are courses on physics, physiology, seamanship and the like—you're expected to know all that when you show up. Candidates are also evaluated to ensure that their physical stamina and water skills are superior, or what the industry refers to as "demonstration quality."

## Trial by Water

**THE INSTRUCTOR EXAMINATION** is a two- to three-day intense period of academic and in-water testing. All of your skills must be fine-tuned before you arrive at the exam because your examiners are not allowed to teach or assist in any way.

A typical IE will consist of a written examination on standards and procedures, physics, physiology, first aid, dive control and supervision, equipment and other general-knowledge areas like seamanship. The next phase is a swim test that is designed to evaluate your conditioning and to see if you have what it takes to complete a rescue in adverse conditions. Divers are then evaluated on classroom presentations, confined

water presentations, and skills in an open-water environment. Throughout this series of tests, your evaluators will create problems to gauge your ability to recognize and deal with unforeseen difficulties.

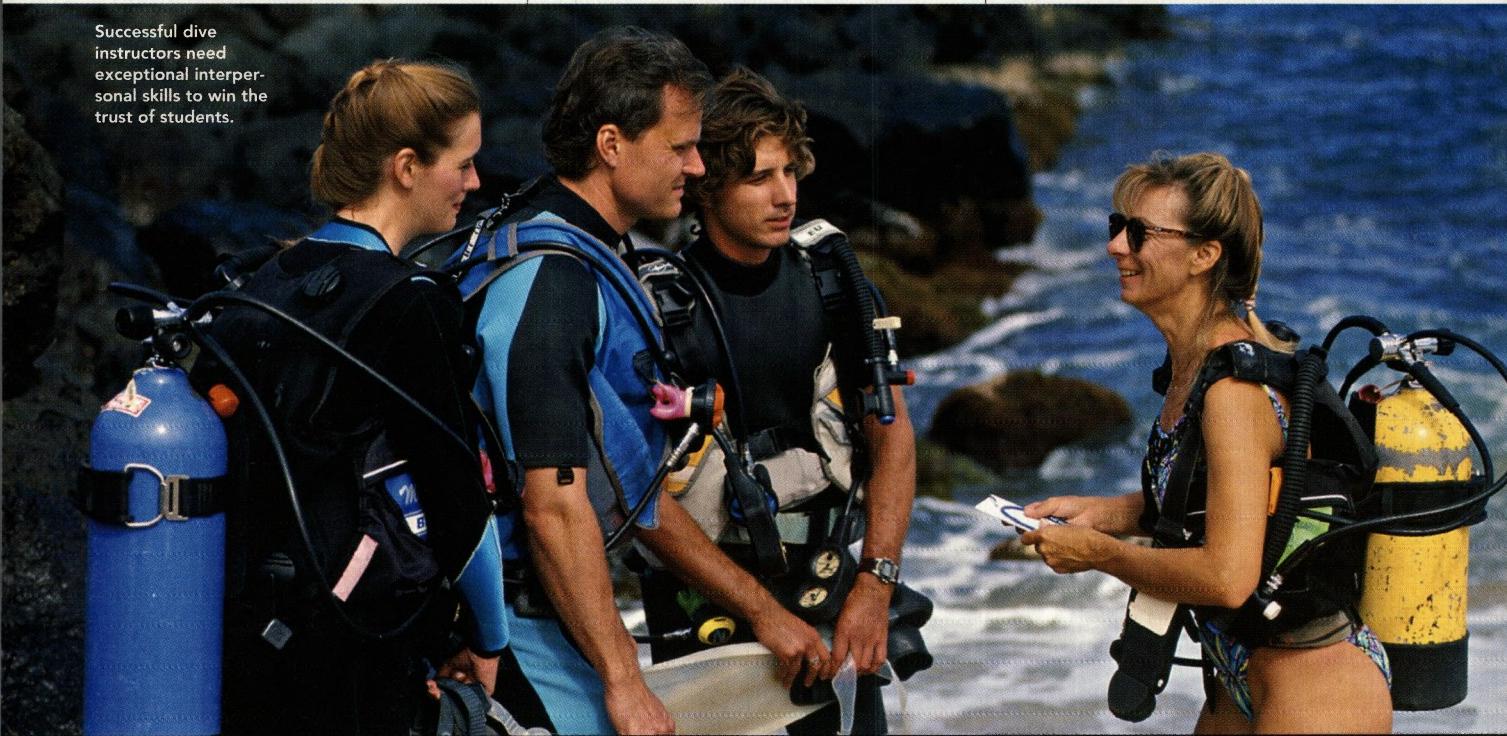
## Are You Ready?

**OBVIOUSLY, BEING A** fantastic diver is a good step in the right direction for becoming an instructor, however, it's only the tip of the iceberg. What lies beneath those superior water skills will determine your level of success.

If you are up to the challenge, exposing people to the underwater world for the first time, fostering their enthusiasm and expanding your skills as an instructor while your students expand theirs as divers is an extremely rewarding vocation. Whether you do it full-time or part-time, the experience is well worth the investment required. SD

**GET MORE >** Learn more about turning your passion into a full-time job in the "Careers in Diving" section of ScubaDiving.com. Go to: [www.scubadiving.com/careers](http://www.scubadiving.com/careers).

Successful dive instructors need exceptional interpersonal skills to win the trust of students.



# THE TURKS & CAICOS:

## Convenient World-Class Diving

Veteran divers have long known that the nearby Turks & Caicos Islands offer a great place for a dive vacation. And it's not just the wall diving, marine life and clear waters that are attracting divers, it's also the excellent diving facilities and friendly operators who offer top-notch service.

The Turks & Caicos Islands started the year by receiving impressive awards in *Scuba Diving's* Top 100 Readers' Choice Awards in the Caribbean/Atlantic category. They were given top prize for Healthiest Marine Life and were ranked second for Best Marine Life. Alongside these awards, the Turks & Caicos was among the top three for Wall Diving and the top five for Underwater Photography and Big Animal Encounters. The Turks & Caicos was also selected as one of the Top Ten Best Dive Destinations.

"We are delighted to have received these awards which add to the Turks & Caicos Islands' growing reputation as a world-class destination," said the Director

of Tourism, Lindsey Musgrove. "We are always very pleased when our destination is recognized internationally for its natural beauty. These awards join our other awards for the best beaches in the world from *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine and awards for our accommodations and spas."

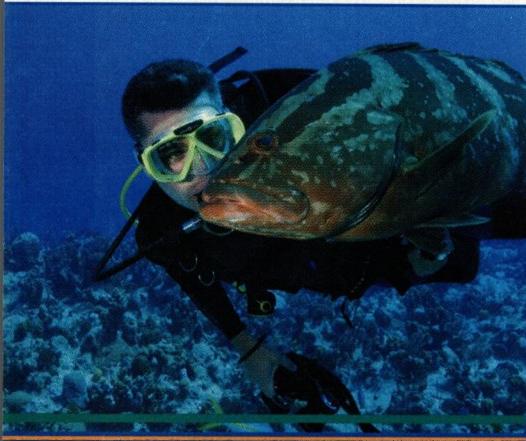
The 40 islands of the Turks and Caicos, of which eight are inhabited, are renowned for their award-winning beaches, diving and array of varied resorts. There are three daily, 75-minute direct flights from Miami to Providenciales (often called Provo), as well as a daily US Airways direct flight from Charlotte and weekly flights from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Atlanta and Toronto.

### A Quick Geography Lesson

The Turks & Caicos are an Atlantic archipelago situated southeast of The Bahamas and north of the island of Hispaniola (the Dominican Republic and Haiti). The islands are, fittingly enough, divided into two chains called the Turks Islands and the Caicos Islands. These are divided by the deep channel called the Turks Island Passage, which plunges more than two miles deep in spots.

Thanks to the deep channel and the various islands cropping right out of the deep sea, great diving conditions result. Steep walls, lots of coral, giant sponges, varied and numerous marine life and pelagic

# BOOK IT!



spotings are the norm for this geographic wonder!

### The Diving

Divers typically head for one of four islands: Provo, Grand Turk, South Caicos and Salt Cay. All provide a great base for Turks & Caicos diving, with each offering a varying degree of amenities and styles. Virtually any diver can find their ideal destination on one of these four islands.

Once there, divers will find warm waters, typically crystal-clear visibility and a wide array of diving options for all skill levels. Highlights have to include world-famous walls, huge and colorful hard or soft corals, dramatic sponges of all types, anemones and the marine life that includes turtles, rays, parrotfish, drums, grouper, lobster, eels, sharks, whales and dolphins.

Relatively speaking, Provo is the "busiest" island for divers. The island's **Northwest Point** and uninhabited **West Caicos** (one hour away) are the most popular wall diving destinations, with **Coral Stairway** on Northwest Point and **Shark Hotel** over on West Caicos two of many Provo highlights.

Next, quieter Grand Turk offers short boat rides to awe-inspiring dive sites, with the entire west coast of the island designated as a marine park! Highlights here have to include **McDonald's** and **Tunnels**.

The even quieter South Caicos offers a huge marine park on the island's eastern shore, with the **Convair 29A** airplane wreck and phenomenal walls among many draws. Finally, Salt Cay brings some serious solitude to go with typically great Turks

& Caicos diving. Be sure to get out to **Kelly's Folly** and the **HMS Endymion**.

Of course, excellent full-service operators in the Turks & Caicos make it easy to enjoy this diving wonderland. Visiting



divers will find friendly and professional staffs, making for a safe and fun dive vacation above and below the surface.

### Topside

Dive vacationers who love the Turks & Caicos are drawn by the diving and the quiet nature of the islands and residents. Casinos and serious partying aren't the draws here—varied accommodations, great dining, beaches and outdoor pursuits are!

Topside time allows time for beach and pool lounging, swimming, snorkeling and other watersports. For something different, several award-winning spas provide a way to soothe sore muscles after a dive. In addition, a wide array of restaurant options have made the Turks & Caicos a dining destination as well!

#### > Blue Water Divers

Grad Turk, Salt Cay,  
South Caicos  
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mrolling@tciway.tc  
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Grand Turk, Salt Cay,  
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[oasisdiv@tciway.tc](mailto:oasisdiv@tciway.tc)  
[www.oasisdivers.com](http://www.oasisdivers.com)

#### > Osprey Beach Hotel

Grand Turk  
649-946-2226  
[ospreybeach@tciway.tc](mailto:ospreybeach@tciway.tc)  
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#### > Provo Turtle Divers

Providenciales  
800-833-1341, 649-946-4232  
[ProvoturtleDivers@Provo.net](mailto:ProvoturtleDivers@Provo.net)  
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#### > Sea Eye Diving

Grand Turk  
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To start planning your Turks & Caicos dive vacation, visit the Turks and Caicos Tourist Board web site at [www.turksandcaicostourism.com](http://www.turksandcaicostourism.com)

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Habitat Curacao, the islands' top-rated dive and spa resort, has great Fall deals with a range of "Sunny Caribbean Escape" packages until December 17th. You'll get a massive 25% savings on boat dive packages with accommodations in an ocean or garden view suite. Every spacious suite provides great views and is equipped with a/c, phone, satellite TV, kitchenette and large private patio or balcony.



Habitat Curacao offers some of the best diving in the Caribbean on pristine reefs, alive with healthy corals and hundreds of species of marine life. Habitat Curacao's PADI 5-Star and Instructor Development Center offers boat dives daily to over 35 locations including the world famous Mushroom Forest. With Habitat's Diving Freedom program, it's also possible to enjoy unlimited 24/7 shore diving. Beginner to instructor dive courses, equipment rental, Nitrox and rebreathers are all available.

Habitat Curacao is also great choice for non-diving companions who want to enjoy a relaxing vacation. The new luxury boutique spa offers relaxing massages and facials. Guests can also try yoga, hiking to the nearby flamingo sanctuary or a complimentary shuttle will whisk you to town.

A seven-night "Leisure" package costs just \$483 in a garden view suite or \$567 in an oceanview suite with buffet breakfast daily, welcome cocktail and use of Habitat's complimentary town shuttle. For an additional \$225, scuba divers can add three, two-tank boat dives and six days of unlimited shore diving with tanks, weights and belt. Prices are per person based on double-occupancy rates. Low-cost airfares, travel insurance, land transfers, vehicle rentals and island tours can also be included with any package.

#### CONTACT

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## >THE FIJI AGGRESSOR II

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Offering typical Aggressor luxury and service for 10 or fewer lucky divers, the *Fiji Aggressor II* explores the reefs, bommies and walls of famed Nigali Pass, Wakaya, Koro, Namenalala Islands, and much more, including sites like Bligh Waters, Makonai, Namena, E-6, Hi-8, and Gau.

Drift dives are conducted safely and conveniently from the mother ship, with eagle rays, mantas, turtles, sharks, and giant groupers typically on the highlight list. An onboard photo lab, complete with E-6 processing and housed digital camera rentals, make this ship a photographer's haven.

Along with world-class diving, the weekly Saturday-to-Saturday itinerary also features an island visit complete with kava ceremony and native dancing (weather permitting).

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**M**any divers may not know that the *Fiji Aggressor II* and the entire Aggressor Fleet are actually available for private group charters. Ideal for dive clubs, family reunions and the like, the group chooses the itinerary, activities, and food and Aggressor does the rest in its typical first-class style. The charters are quite competitively priced when compared with other yachts (which generally don't even offer diving).

# Depth

1



## GREAT DIVES: EL BAJON, HIERRO, CANARY ISLANDS, P. 17 •

European divers regularly dive Hierro's coast, but the island's mountainous terrain and rocky seashore keep larger groups of tourists at bay. Be wary of strong currents, as they are affected by wind and other variables and usually aren't assessed until the dive boat arrives at the site. **Dive Operators:** Centro de Buceo Arrecifal, (011) 922-55-7171, [www.arrecifal.com](http://www.arrecifal.com); Centro de Buceo El Hierro, (011) 922-55-7023, [www.centrodebuceoelhierro.com](http://www.centrodebuceoelhierro.com); El Submarino, (011) 34-922-55-7075, [www.elsubmarinobuceo.com](http://www.elsubmarinobuceo.com); El Tambo-rial, (011) 34-922-557-7184, [www\\_eltambo-rial.com](http://www_eltambo-rial.com); Hierro-Sub, (011) 922-55-0482, [www.inicia.es/de/hierro\\_sub](http://www.inicia.es/de/hierro_sub); Mobula Buceo, (011) 34-922-55-8164, [www.mobulabuceo.com](http://www.mobulabuceo.com).

## GREAT DIVES: SANGEANG ISLAND, INDONESIA, P. 18 •

Sangeang is a small island located off the northeast coast of Sumbawa Island, and is an amazing stop on the way to visit the dragons of Komodo. Wild horses roam this small island, which is accessible only



by boat. Depths are 16 to 100 feet, and visibility is great except when strong fin-kicks and large volcanic bubbles stir up the black, silty sand.

**Live-aboards:** Albatross Diving Adventure, (011) 62-361-242-917, [www.albatrossdive.com](http://www.albatrossdive.com); Baruna Adventurer and Baruna Explorer, (011) 62-361-753-820, [www.komodo-divencruise.com](http://www.komodo-divencruise.com); Dive Asia Pacific, (800) 962-0395, [www.diveasiapacific.com](http://www.diveasiapacific.com); Grand Komodo Tours and Dives, (011) 62-361-287-166, [www.komodoalordive.com](http://www.komodoalordive.com); Indonesia Cruises, (011) 62-361-730-191, [www.ombakputih.com](http://www.ombakputih.com); Kararu Dive Voyages, (011) 62-361-282-931, [www.kararu.com](http://www.kararu.com); Peter

Hughes' Komodo Dancer, (800) 932-6237, [www.peterhughes.com](http://www.peterhughes.com); Sea World Dive Team, (011) 66-76-341-595, [www.seaworld-phuket.com](http://www.seaworld-phuket.com).

## GREAT DIVES: COLUMBIA REEF, COZUMEL, MEXICO, P. 20 •

Columbia Reef comprises four separate dive sites, all well-known to local dive operators. Expect a mild current most times of the year, with depths ranging from 25 to 120 feet. Vis stays near 100 feet year-round. For a list of Cozumel dive operators, plus travel guides and more, go to [www.scubadiving.com](http://www.scubadiving.com) and click on TripFinder.

BERKLEY WHITE

## 2

**MICRONESIA, P. 34****Water Conditions**

Because Micronesia sits atop the equator, water temps are in the low 80s (from 82 to 86 degrees) year-round. Expect consistent, triple-digit visibility in Palau. Vis can sometimes be lower inside Truk Lagoon. **Weather** This close to the equator there's little seasonal variation, so Micronesia's climate is always warm and humid. Nighttime lows hover around the mid-70s while daytime highs approach 86 degrees. **Dive Permits** On Palau, the \$15 dive permit to dive Koror is included in most packages, but permits for Peleliu and Babeldoab will cost \$20 extra apiece. **Entry Documents** Though you only need proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate and photo I.D., a passport is strongly recommended. **Electricity** 110 volts, 60 cycles, like the U.S. and Canada. **Currency** There's no need to change money in Micronesia as the U.S. dollar is the accepted currency. **Departure Tax** \$15 for Chuuk and \$20 for Palau. **Tourism** Federated States of Micronesia Visitors Board, [www.visit-fsm.org](http://www.visit-fsm.org) and [www.visit-palau.com](http://www.visit-palau.com). **For More Information** For detailed information on Micronesia dive operators, comprehensive travel guides, special dive deals and recent trip reports submitted by users, click on TripFinder at the top of our home page, [www.scubadiving.com](http://www.scubadiving.com).

**TRAVEL GUIDE:**

## 3

**DRIVE & DIVE: PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, P. 40**

**GETTING THERE:** To reach dive operators at Riviera Beach Marina, take I-95 to exit 76, and go east on Blue Heron Blvd. Turn right on U.S. 1 (Broadway); then left on 13th Street to Riviera Beach Marina. **WATER CONDITIONS:** Water temps range from 75 to 85 degrees. Visibility is variable, depending on local rainfall and the strength of offshore currents. Days of 100-foot-plus vis are not uncommon in Palm Beach County. Deeper sites generally have clearer water and more current.

**DIVE SEASON:** Conditions are best for diving from May through September as the fall hurricane season and the winter storms that follow can churn up seas. **TOURISM:** Palm Beach County Convention & Visitors Bureau, [www.palmbeachfl.com](http://www.palmbeachfl.com).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** For detailed information on Palm Beach County, Fla., dive operators, comprehensive travel guides and recent trip reports submitted by users, click on TripFinder at the top of our home page, [www.scubadiving.com](http://www.scubadiving.com).

## 4

**Dive Log: Curaçao, p. 62**

**Water Conditions** Average water temp is 80 degrees, with fluctuations between 78 and 82 degrees. **Entry Documents** Either proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate and photo I.D., or a passport. **Currency** The U.S. dollar is accept-

ed everywhere on Curaçao, but you will get Netherlands Antilles guilders (NAFI) back in change, at a consistent rate of 1.78 to the buck. Credit cards are widely accepted. The departure tax is \$22. **Time** Atlantic Standard Time. **Electricity**

> 127 volts, 50 cycles. Converters are available should you need them. Most resorts, however, now have 110 volt, 60 cycle plugs in guest rooms. **Getting Around** Renting a car or truck is a must to take full advantage of the shore diving on Curaçao. A valid driver's license is required. **Tourism** Curaçao Tourism Develop-

ment Bureau, [www.curacao-tourism.com](http://www.curacao-tourism.com). **For More Information**

> For detailed information on Curaçao dive operators, comprehensive travel guides, special dive deals and recent trip reports submitted by users, click on TripFinder at the top of our home page, [www.scubadiving.com](http://www.scubadiving.com).

## 5



## DRY SUIT FEATURES

MANUFACTURER Model	BASE PRICE	WARRANTY	MADE IN	MATERIAL	ENTRY	SEALS/STYLE	SUSPENDERS	SIZES	OWNER'S MANUAL	CONTACT	
<b>FABRIC SHELL SUITS</b>											
DUI TLS350	\$1,798	suit, 7 yrs.; zipper & valves, 1 yr.; seals, 90 days	USA	nylon, butyl rubber, nylon tri-laminate	front, diagonal zip	latex/cone	yes	5 men's, 6 women's (custom sizing available)	very good	<a href="http://www.DUI-Online.com">www.DUI-Online.com</a>	
WHITES Catalyst SE QuadFlex	\$2,098	material, 1 yr.; workmanship, 2 yrs.; seals not covered; zipper & valves not listed	Canada	QuadFlex	front, diagonal zip (also available with horizontal waist zipper as well as rear entry)	latex/bell	yes	12 (custom sizing available)	fair	<a href="http://www.whitescoldwater.com">www.whitescoldwater.com</a>	
MOBBY'S Armor Shell Pro	\$1,899	suit, 4 yrs.; zipper & valves, 1 yr.; seals, 90 days	Thailand	1000 denier Cordura outer shell, ceramic aluminum polyvinyl chloride inner shell	front, horizontal zip	latex/cone	yes	7 (custom sizing available)	fair	<a href="http://www.mobbys.com">www.mobbys.com</a>	
PINNACLE AQUATICS Evolution Dry	\$1,379	workmanship, limited lifetime; suit and zipper, 1 yr.; seals, 90 days; valves not listed	Philippines and USA	220-gram German Cordura and polyester	rear	latex/bell	yes	11 men's, 6 women's (custom sizing not available)	fair	<a href="http://www.pinnacleaquatics.com">www.pinnacleaquatics.com</a>	
HUNTER DIVING Pro VSN 1100 Tek	\$2,166	seams, lifetime; zipper & valves, 1 yr.; seals, 90 days	England	hybrid stretch rubber, nylon tri-laminates	rear	latex/cone	yes	8 (custom sizing not available)	excellent	<a href="http://www.hunter-diving.com">www.hunter-diving.com</a>	
DIVING CONCEPTS Z Flex	\$1,200	suit, 7 yrs.; zipper & valves, 1 yr.; seals, 90 days	USA	Cordura nylon high-stretch tri-laminates	front, diagonal zip	latex/cone	yes	6 (custom sizing not available)	very good	<a href="http://www.divingconcepts.com">www.divingconcepts.com</a>	
OCEANIC M2O Biodyr	\$1,750	suit, limited lifetime; zipper, 90 days; seals, 6 months	USA	BioFlex with Cordura panels	(front-zip available)	rear	latex/bell (neoprene available)	yes	made to order (M2O)	good	<a href="http://www.oceanicww.com">www.oceanicww.com</a>
O.S. SYSTEMS HD Pro	\$1,520	suit, 2 yrs.; valves, 3 yrs.; seals, 60 days; zipper is not covered	USA	210 denier high-count nylon inner coated with polyurethane	front, horizontal zip	latex/bell	yes	6 (custom sizing available)	good	<a href="http://www.osystems.com">www.osystems.com</a>	
USIA Aqua Pro Plus	\$1,100	seams, limited lifetime; zippers, 60 days; valves, 6 months; valves, lifetime on mfr. defects	USA	400 denier nylon with 1000 denier Cordura overlays, BioFlex gussets, urethane inner coating	front, diagonal zip (also available with horizontal waist zipper as well as rear entry)	latex/bell	yes	16 (custom sizing available)	fair	<a href="http://www.usia.com">www.usia.com</a>	
VIKING Pro Tech F/E Surveyor	\$2,350	seams, 1 yr.; zippers, 90 days; seals not covered	Sweden	vulcanized rubber with polyester inner lining	front, diagonal zip (also available in rear entry)	latex/cone	yes	10 (custom sizing not available at this time)	excellent	<a href="http://www.vikingdiving.com">www.vikingdiving.com</a>	
<b>NEOPRENE SUITS</b>											
DUI CF200X	\$2,298	suit, 7 yrs.; zipper & valves, 1 yr.; seals, 90 days	USA	patented crushed neoprene	front, diagonal zip	latex/cone	yes	7 men's (custom sizing available for men & women)	very good	<a href="http://www.DUI-Online.com">www.DUI-Online.com</a>	
WHITES PolarFlex BE DT2MM Quadflex	\$1,958.30	workmanship, 3 yrs.; materials, 1 yr.	Canada	Quadflex upper with 4mm Denstek lower compressed to 2mm	rear	latex/bell	yes	12 men's, 8 women's (custom sizing available)	very good	<a href="http://www.whitescoldwater.com">www.whitescoldwater.com</a>	
WATERPROOF GEAR Antarctic 2000 Zor	\$1,390	2-yr. limited	Sweden	4mm high-density Microcell neoprene with Toughtex nylon coating	rear	latex/cone	no	12 men's, 10 women's (custom sizing not available)	very good	<a href="http://www.waterproof.se">www.waterproof.se</a>	
BARE WETSUITS XCD2 Tech Dry	\$1,499.95	workmanship, limited lifetime; materials, 1 yr.	Canada	2mm hyper-compressed Metallite neoprene with Diamond-Tuff nylon lining	front, diagonal zip	latex/bell on wrists, neoprene on neck	no, but are optional	15 (custom sizing available)	good	<a href="http://www.bare-wetsuits.com">www.bare-wetsuits.com</a>	
APOLLO SPORTS EX Microcell 4.0 Ultra	\$1,250	material, seams, zipper, boots and seals, 1 yr.; valves, lifetime to original owner	Japan	4mm Microcell neoprene	rear	latex/cone	yes	6 men's, 3 women's (custom sizing not available)	fair	<a href="http://www.apollosportsusa.com">www.apollosportsusa.com</a>	
BAYLEYSUIT Aquastatic	\$1,800	1 yr.	USA	Special quad-laminate and tri-laminate materials	rear	neoprene	no, but are optional	custom sizing only	fair	<a href="http://www.bayleysuit.com">www.bayleysuit.com</a>	
DIVING CONCEPTS Neo Z	\$1,200	suit, 7 yrs.; zipper & valves, 1 yr.; seals, 90 days	USA	2mm Rubatex G-231 gas-blown neoprene	front, diagonal zip	latex/cone	yes	6 (custom sizing not available)	very good	<a href="http://www.divingconcepts.com">www.divingconcepts.com</a>	
OCEANER Riptide 3mm Titanium	\$1,250	materials, 1 yr.; workmanship & seams, limited lifetime; zippers, 60 days	Canada	3mm titanium layered hyper-compressed neoprene	rear	neoprene (latex seals are optional)	no, but are optional	7 men's, 7 women's (custom sizing available)	fair	<a href="http://www.oceaner.com">www.oceaner.com</a>	
TUSA HRS	\$1,499	seams, 2 yrs.; valves, 5 yrs.; seals not covered	Thailand and Japan	5-layer, of 3.5mm hyper-compressed neoprene	rear	neoprene	yes	10 men's, 9 women's (custom sizing not available)	fair	<a href="http://www.tusa.com">www.tusa.com</a>	

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[www.peterhughes.com](http://www.peterhughes.com)  
Trimarine/Cuan Law > 1-800-648-3393  
[www.galapagosdiving.com](http://www.galapagosdiving.com)

## Photography

Underwater Photo Tech > 1-603-432-1997  
[www.uwphoto.com](http://www.uwphoto.com)

## Miscellaneous

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[www.deltaconnectionacademy.com](http://www.deltaconnectionacademy.com)  
Hilton Caribbean > 1-800-HILTONS  
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Rolex Watch USA > 1-800-ROLEX [www.rolex.com](http://www.rolex.com)

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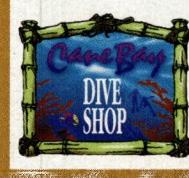
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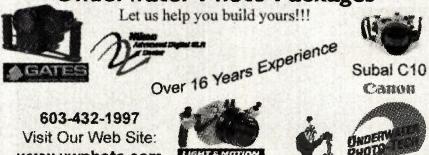


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